

CHAPTER 10

INVENTORY OF UNDEVELOPED LAND

In 1973, as part of the investigation for the original Chatham Township Natural Resources Inventory, 35 volunteers, working under the guidance of professionals, inspected and described the undeveloped land in Chatham Township. This was an unprecedented effort, and made our town's Natural Resources Inventory unique.

All of Chatham Township was divided into four principal regions, each of which has similar characteristics of soil, topography and drainage and the following basic information:

- A table of statistics relating to land use in the Principal Region.
- An outline map of the Township with the Principal Region marked.
- A cross-section of the region is presented, with certain features marked. A line showing the position of the cross-section is marked on the outline .
- Under the cross-section, there is a table giving the past and present land use in acres, the drainage characteristics, the vegetative cover and the kind of soil. Because of the limitation of space, this table is coded. The full legend may be found on page 00.

The inventoried sites are then presented in the context of these regions:

PRINCIPAL REGION: SOUTH OF RIDGE

Site 1	The Ridge and Shale Pit (Esternay)
Site 2	The Passaic River

PRINCIPAL REGION: NORTH OF RIDGE

Site 3	The Orchard
Site 4	Mountainview

PRINCIPAL REGION: MORaine

Site 5	Southern Boulevard (Geoffrey Court)
Site 6	Averett (Chatham Glen)

PRINCIPAL REGION:

Site 7	Dodge (Giralda Farms)
Site 8	Loantaka
Site 9	Hickory
Site 10	Delta

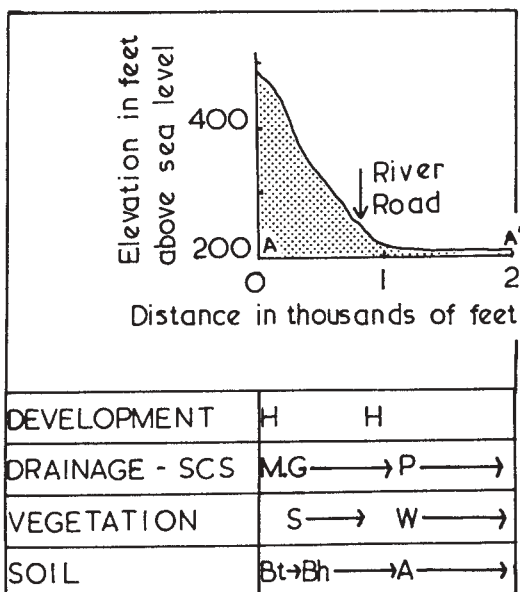
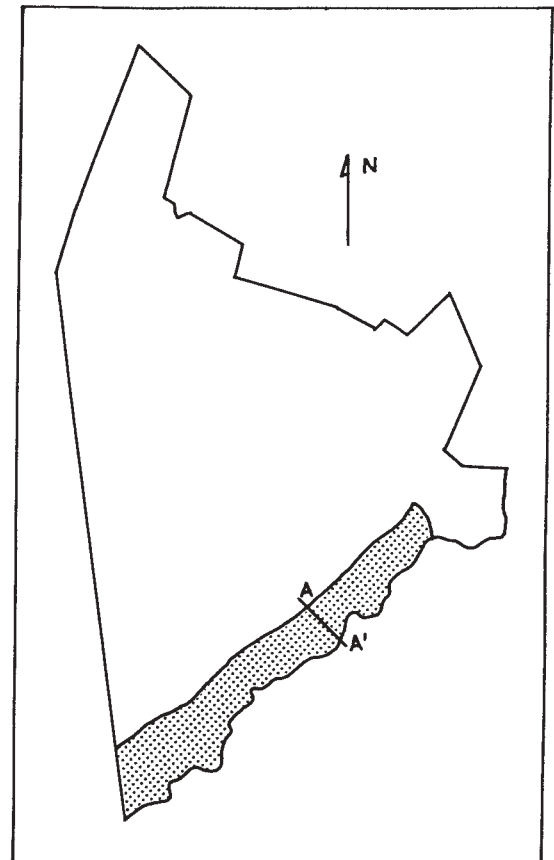
The descriptions have been amended for four areas due to their development since 1973. These four areas are:

Site 3	The Orchard (Tree Top Lane, Jodi Lane and Molino Dr.)
Site 4	Mountainview (Stonewyck, Pembroke Road and Karlin Dr.)
Site 5	Southern Boulevard (Geoffrey Court)
Site 6	Averett (Chatham Glen townhouse development)

Several undeveloped areas of Chatham Township were omitted from this survey: small properties in developed regions, municipally owned lands set aside for specific uses, the Fairmount Country Club and the Noe Pond Club, the sanitary landfill at the end of Britten Road and the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

Figure 17
PRINCIPAL REGION: SOUTH OF RIDGE

ACREAGE	1974	1999	% CHANGE
HOUSE	196	210	+7%
APT/COMMERC	12	12	0%
PUBLIC/SEMI-PUB	18	18	0%
RECREATION	126	126	0%
G.S.N.W.R.			
UNDEVELOPED	<u>330</u>	<u>316</u>	- 4%
TOTAL	682	682	



LEGEND

H	House Environs
PsP	Public/Semi Public
R	Recreation
P	Poor
M	Moderate
G	Good
O	Open
S	Scrub
W	Woodland
A	Alluvial
Bh	Beach
Bt	Basalt
G°	Glacial Outwash
L	Lacustrine
M	Muck
Mo	Moraine
S	Shale
U	Urban

SITE 1. ESTERNAY (FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE RIDGE AND SHALE PIT)

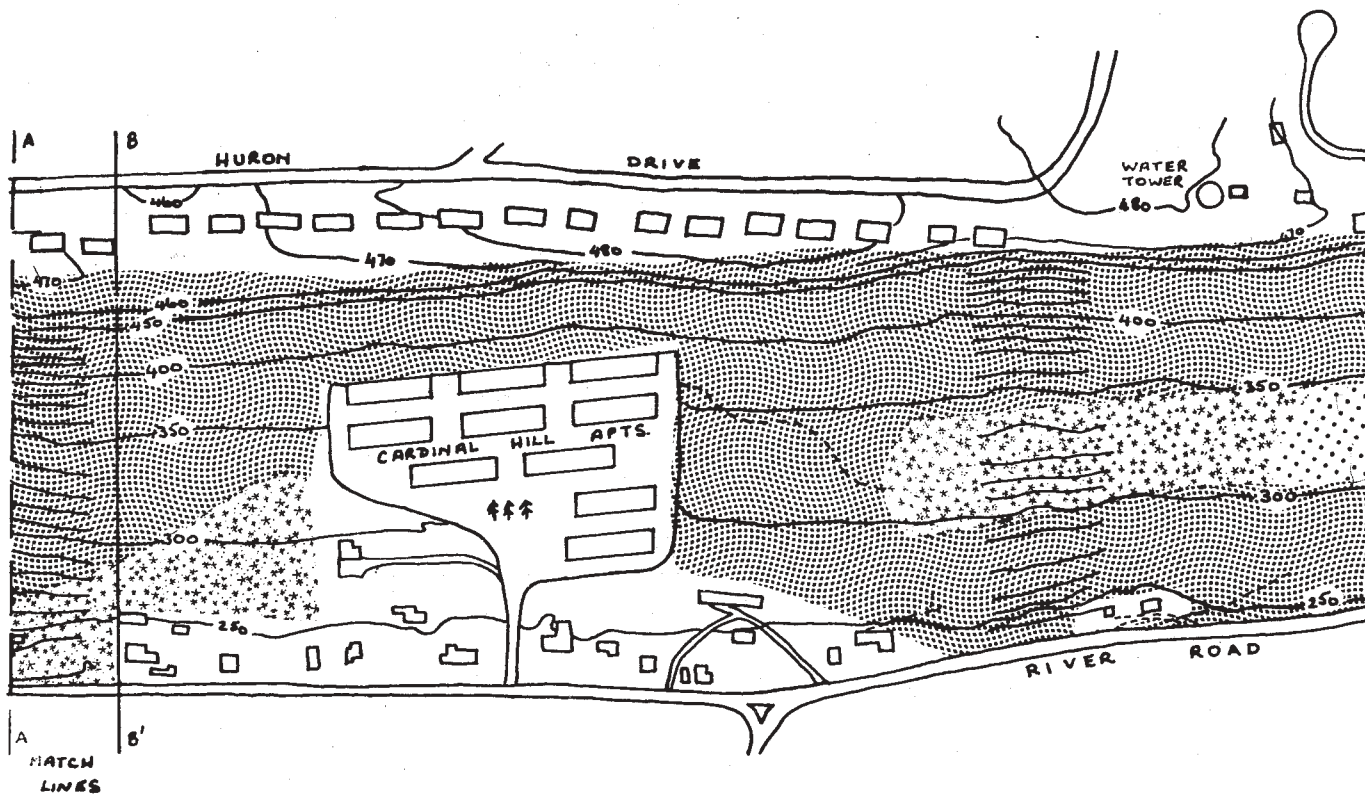
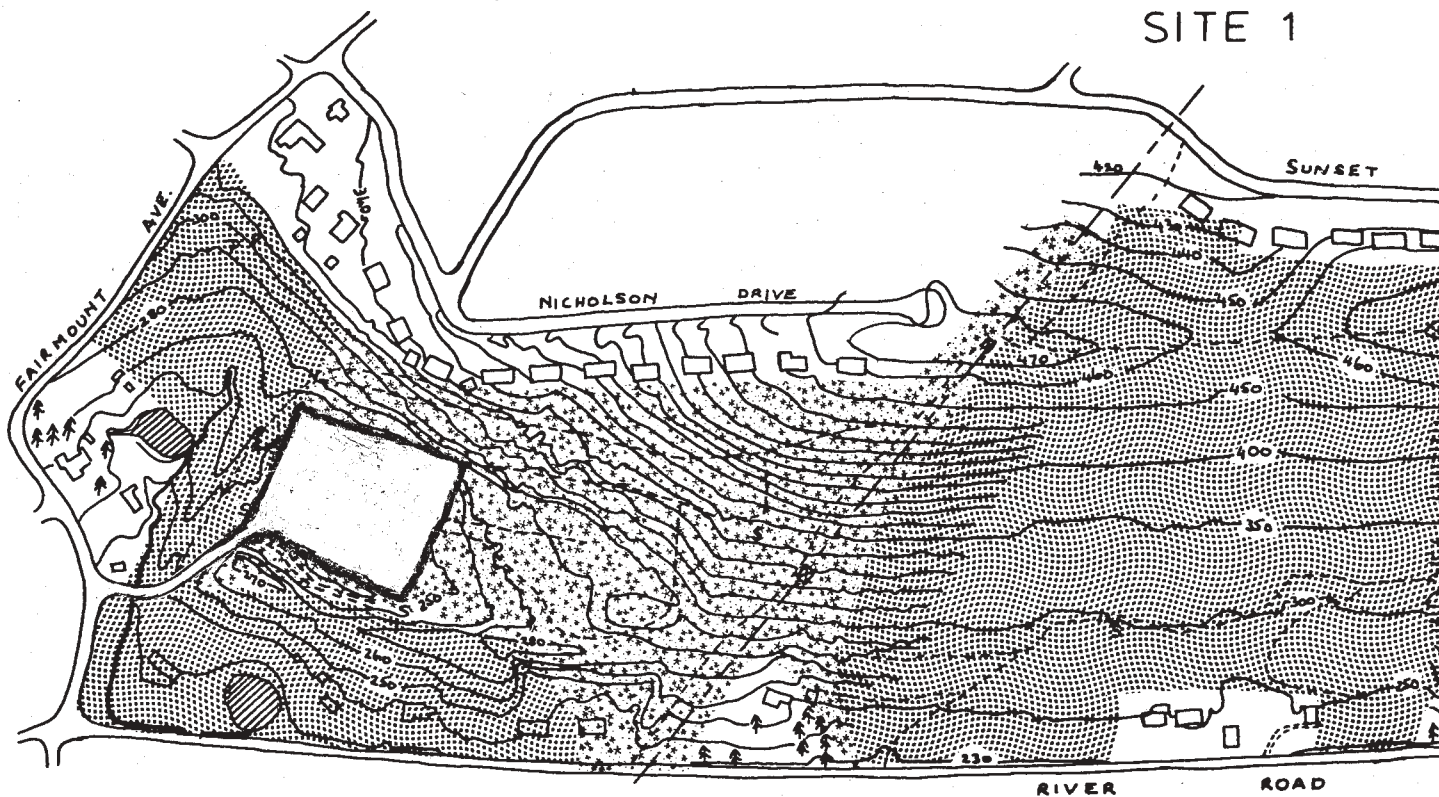
This site to the west of the power lines on easterly facing slopes has two distinct sections. The first section, formerly known as the Ridge along Fairmount Avenue, includes one of Chatham Township's historic houses (pre-1800). This property contains a pond, stream, many old trees, and several flowering trees and shrubs. The second section, formerly known as the Shale Pit, was created years ago when the red shale on the south side of Long Hill was excavated. The excavated site currently appears as a large outdoor theater with overgrown vegetation. The southern exposure supports wildflowers and plants, and produces some unusual vegetative patterns. A soccer field was constructed in 1974 and the area was renamed Esternay Field. The field where children play soccer is surrounded by steep slopes, narrow terraces, and dense thickets. People have been known to hunt for fossils that may be embedded in the loose shale that litters the area surrounding the field. Visitors to this site are struck by its unique formation. Esternay Field cannot be seen from surrounding roads resulting in a secluded setting. Esternay Field is now owned by Chatham Township.

The land to the east of the power lines in this site is a steep southern slope from the crest of Long Hill to River Road. With the exception of the Cardinal Hill Apartments, residential development is located near the base of the hill. Toward the crest of the site the vegetation is mature woodland of beech, oak, maple, ironwood, a few pines and unusually large numbers of flowering dogwood trees. As the land drops abruptly, the woods are filled with huge vines, which climb the trees, giant thorny bushes and dense undergrowth. There is much erosion of the rocky slopes in the western section and below Huron Drive. There are many shale outcroppings and basalt boulders on the hillside. An exception to these general conditions is the open area at the eastern end, which is a gently sloping meadow, now being developed for an eight house subdivision. The Ridge contains a path near the crest that is used for walking.

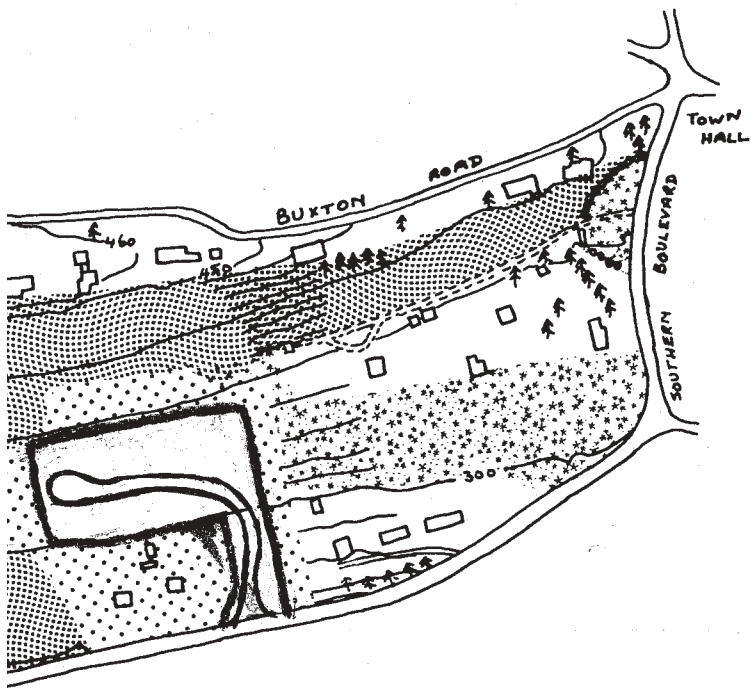
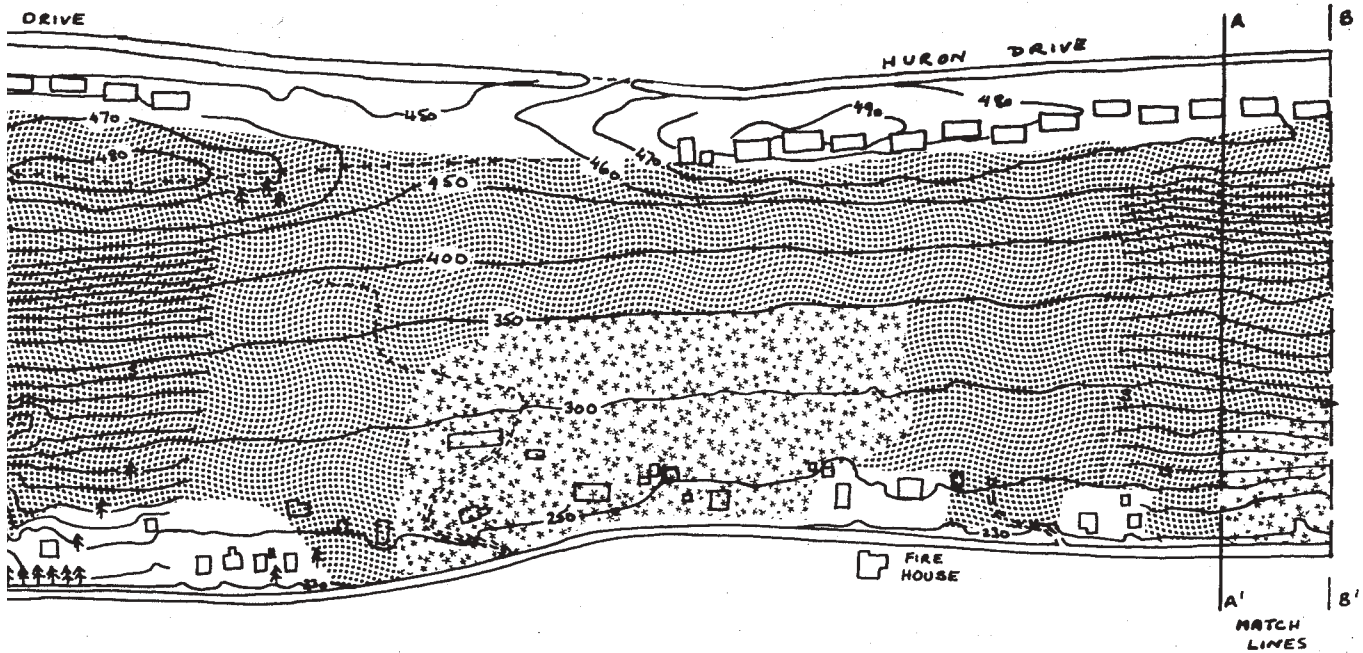
There are scenic views from several places on this site. One of the best spots is at the top of the hill under the power line. From here one can look across the Great Swamp to the hills beyond Morristown, to the Madison-Florham Park areas and in the opposite direction to the valley that lies between Long Hill and the Second Watchung Mountain.

Except where explicitly noted the land described here is private property.

SITE 1



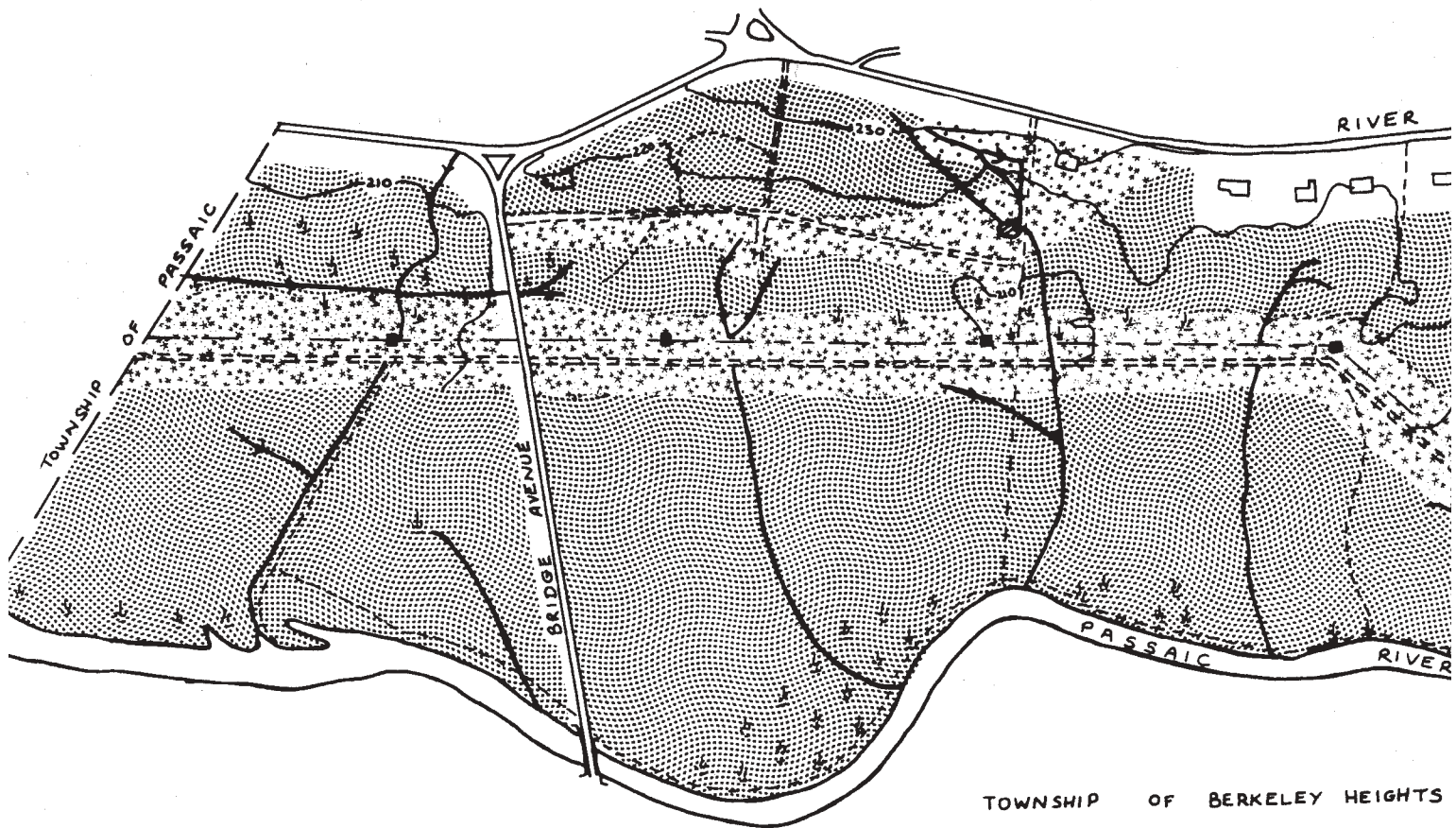
THE RIDGE AND SHALE PIT (ESTERNAY)



1" = 400'

- New Development
- Stream
- Pond
- Elevation
- Open
- Growing back
- Woodland

SITE 2



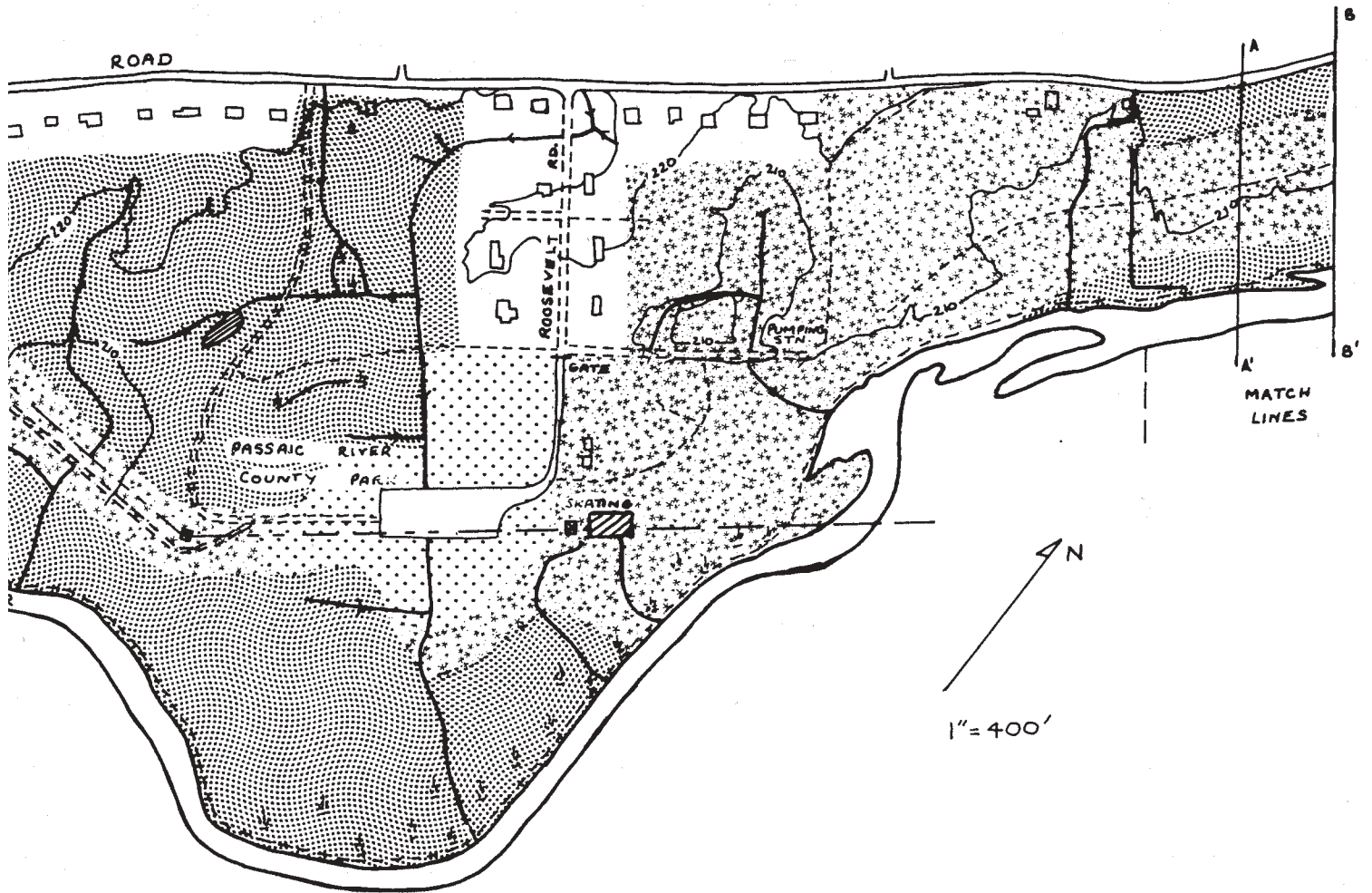
SITE 2. THE PASSAIC RIVER

From the Passaic Township border to this site to the park at the end of Roosevelt Road, this low-lying land supports mostly mature swampy woods. The dominant tree species are pin oak and red maple. Several streams which receive drainage from Long Hill flow straight across the land to the Passaic River. From the park to Central Avenue the land is mainly young woods and fields. The river all along here has a wide, muddy floodplain. When the river is high, the flow of the streams is reversed for a considerable distance upstream. Except for the residential properties shown on the map, most of this section is owned by the Morris County Park Commission. The County has developed a quiet recreation area here with a ball field, skating rink and picnic facilities. Many people take advantage of the park and also use the power lines for walking and horseback riding.

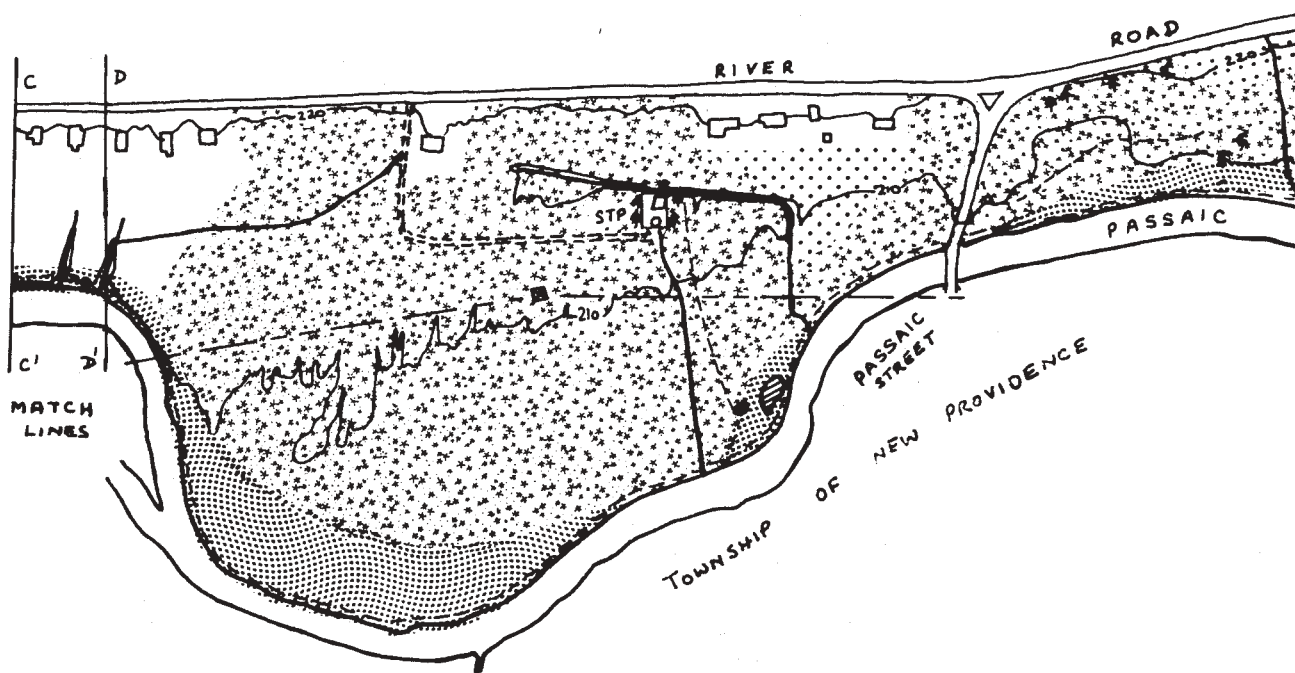
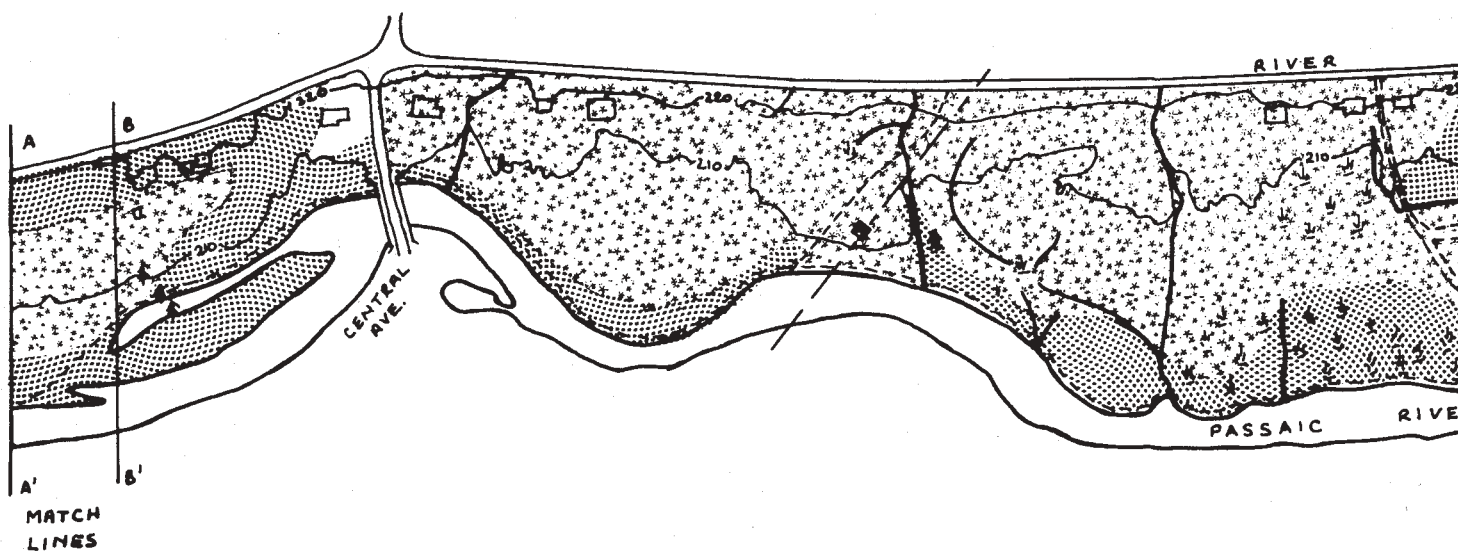
The section of this site between Central Avenue and Passaic Street is also low and wet, but in many ways quite different from the area described above. Except for a border of mature trees along the river, most of the land supports open fields, marsh and brush. There is a great variety of low-growing vegetation such as grasses, reeds, smooth alder, phragmites, cattails, small trees and thorny bushes. The land shows much evidence of use for gardening, dumping and recreation. A section of the river bank just west of the north-south power line is a natural bird sanctuary. The river is eroding its banks just east of the Fire House as if it were trying to join River Road. In places, even during wet Spring conditions, the clay soil is dry, hard and cracked.

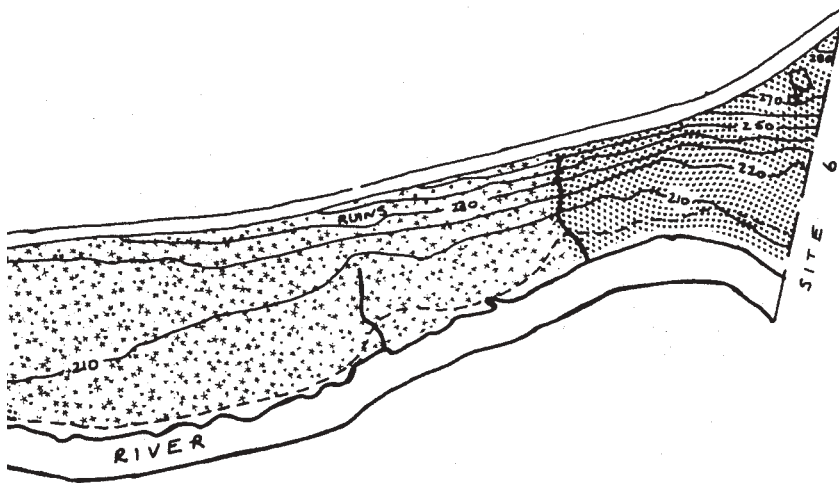
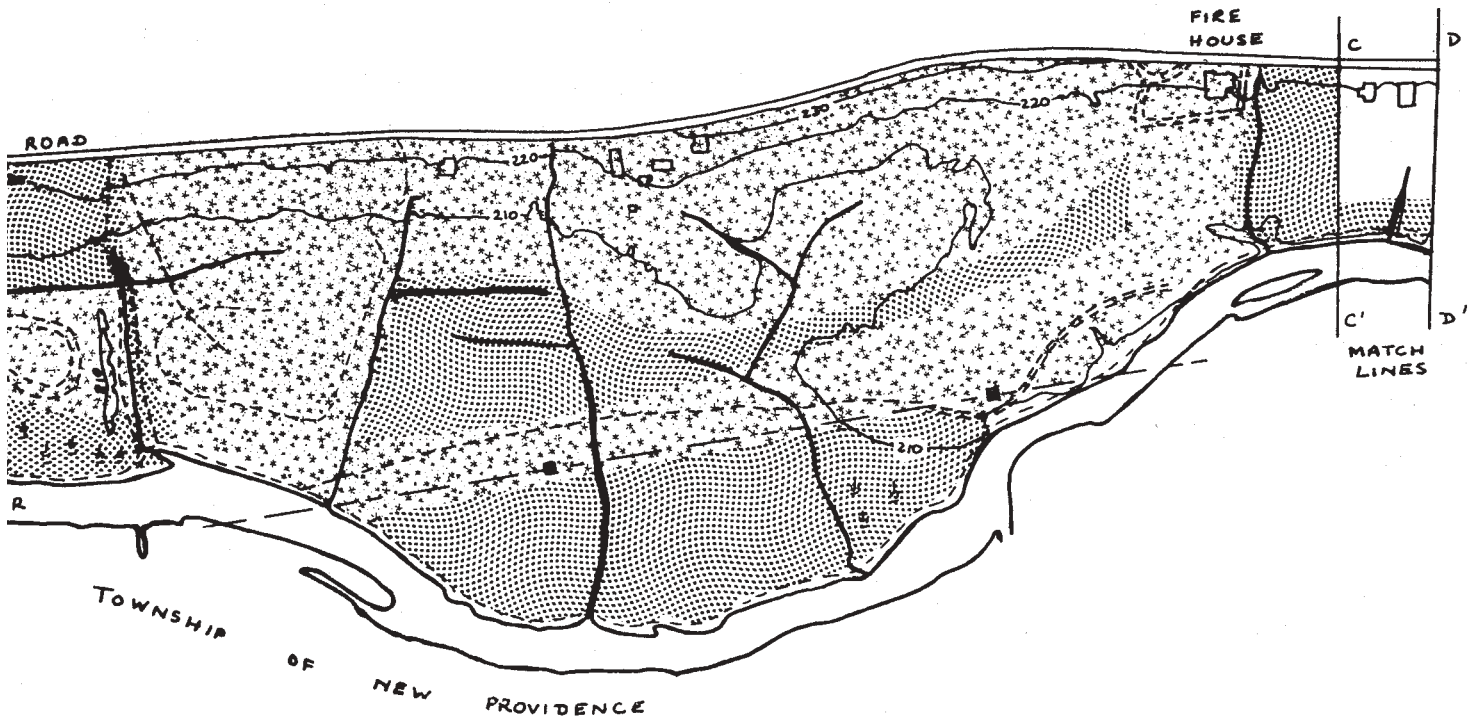
Except where explicitly noted, the land described here is private property.

THE PASSAIC RIVER



PASSAIC RIVER (cont'd)





1" = 400'







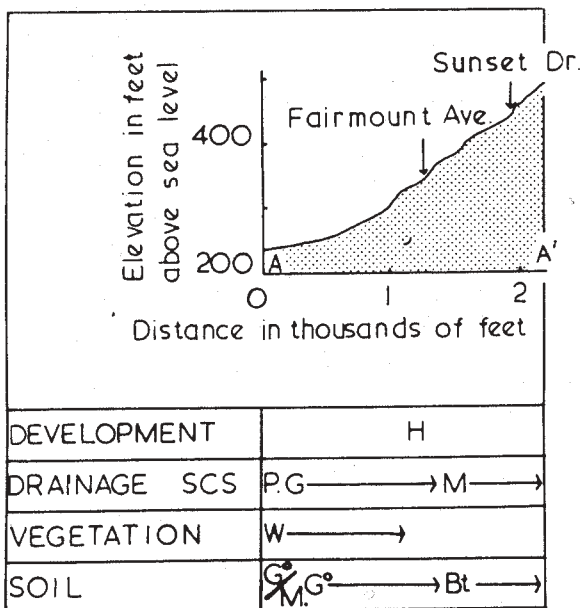
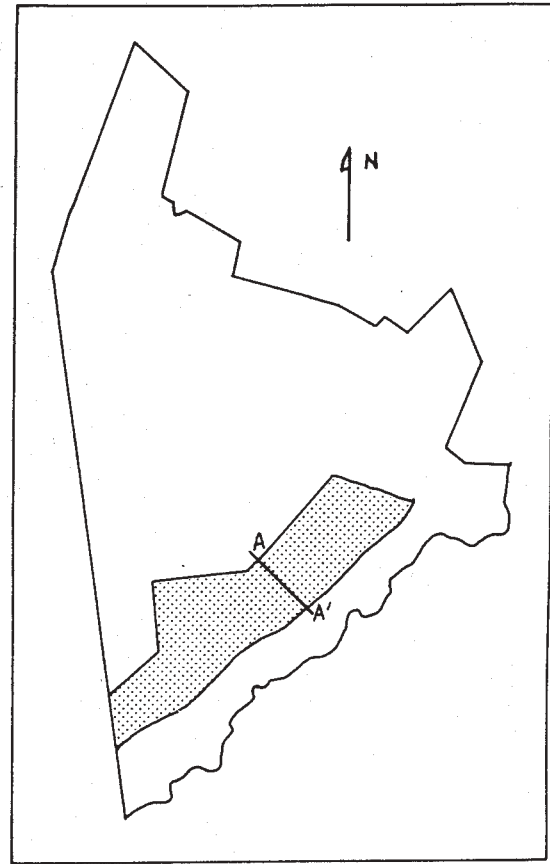
-  Stream
-  Pond
-  Elevation
-  Open
-  Growing back
-  Woodland

Figure 18
PRINCIPAL REGION: NORTH OF RIDGE

ACREAGE	1974	1999	% CHANGE
HOUSE	398	485	+22%
APT/COMMERCIAL	2	2	0%
PUBLIC/SEMI-PUB.	103	103	0%
RECREATION			0%
G.S.N.W.R.	26	26	0%
UNDEVELOPED	<u>352</u>	<u>265</u>	- 25%
TOTAL	881	881	



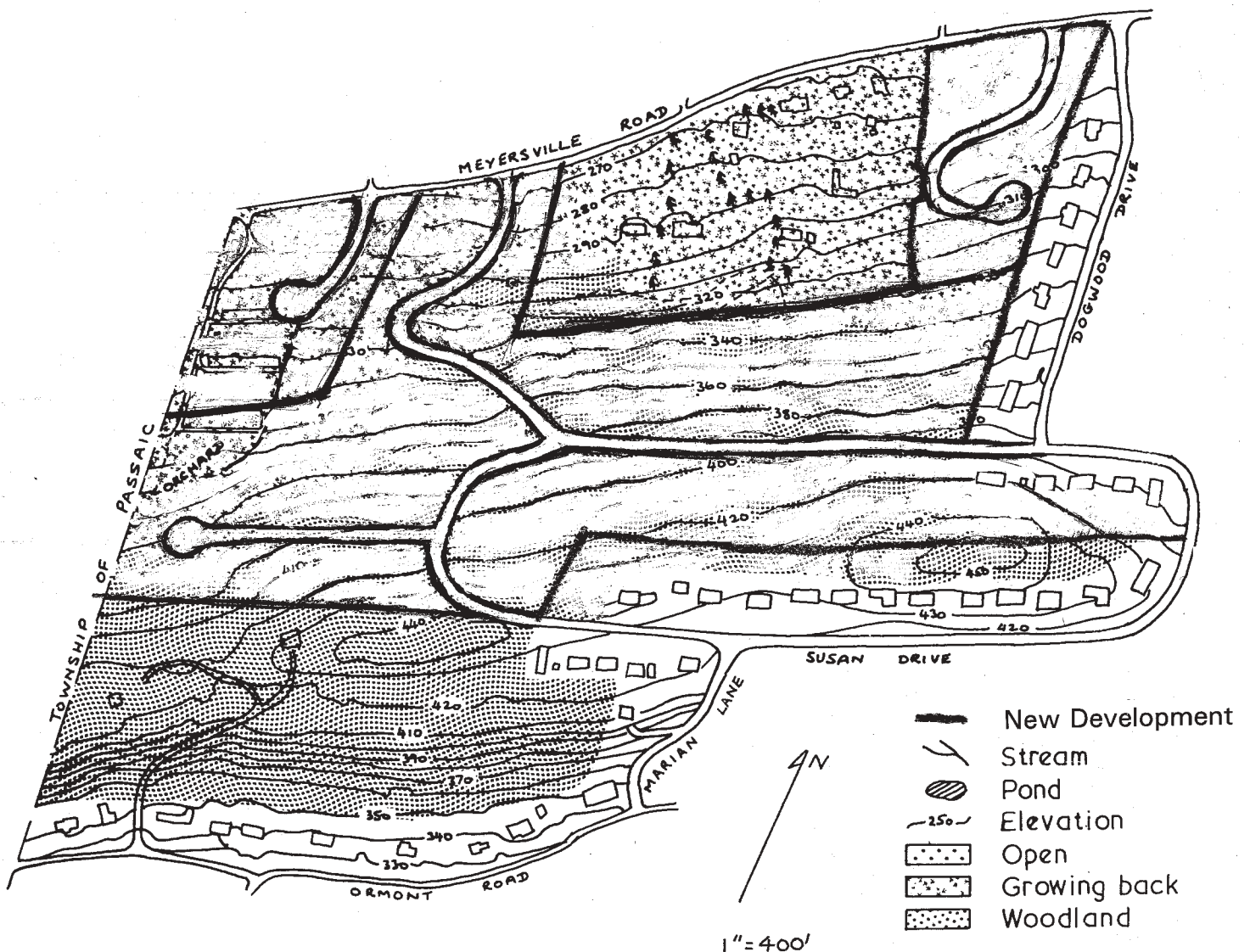
LEGEND: P. 30

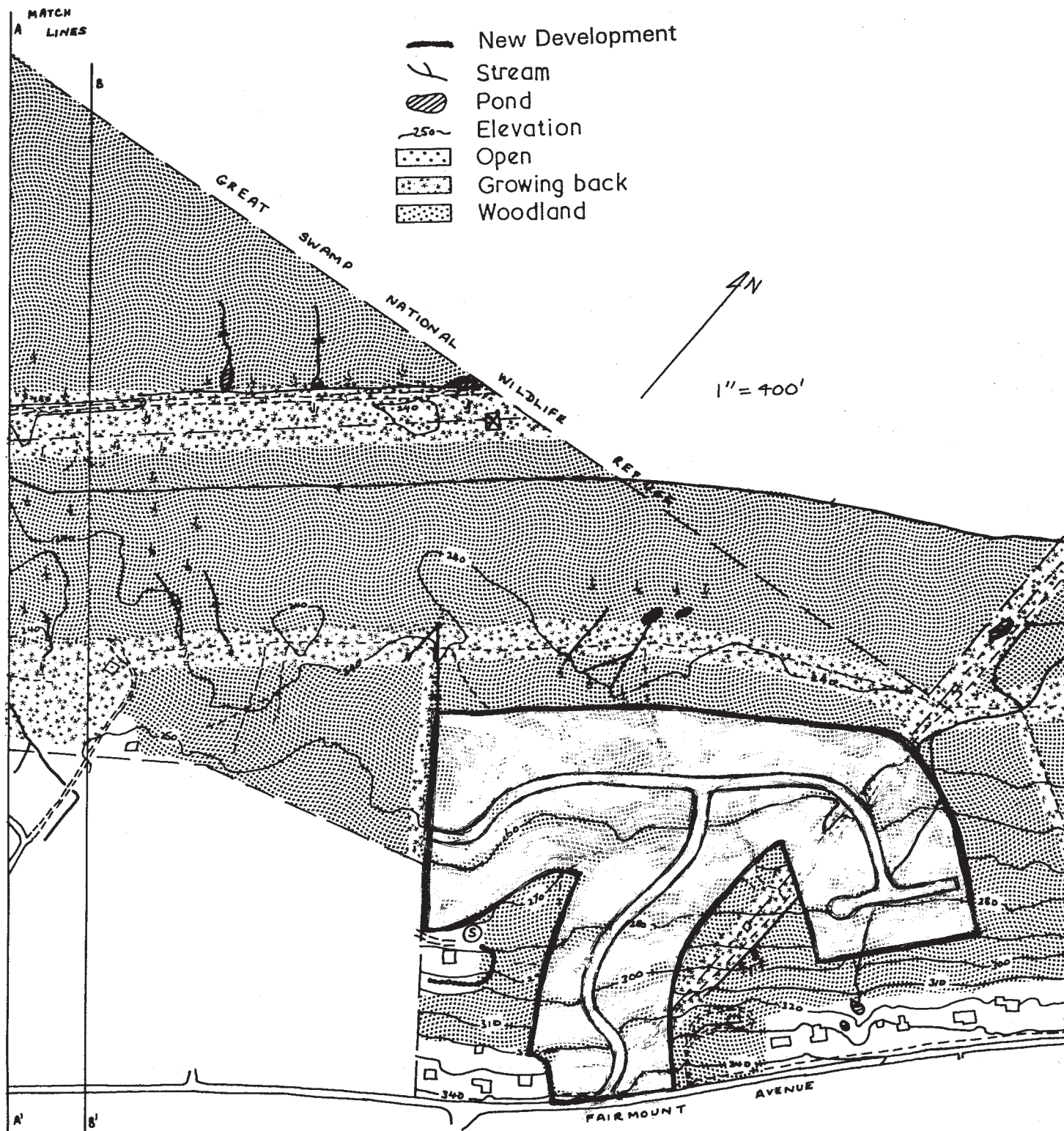
SITE 3. THE ORCHARD

Most of this site was uniform dry woodland sloping west from the crest of Long Hill which rises 190 feet above Meyersville Road. The trees were mainly tulip, oak, beech, ironwood, maple, birch and dogwood. The westerly hillside is now occupied by subdivisions along three new streets: Tree Top Lane, Jodi Lane and Molino Drive.

A small portion of this site is on the steeper slope of Long Hill facing east towards the Passaic River. The change in natural conditions is marked and interesting. The southern exposure is much more wild and varied. There are some huge old trees, a few young ones, many vines and brambles, small bushes and grasses. There are good views to the south from the area along Susan Drive.

Except where explicitly noted, the land described here is private property.





SITE 4. MOUNTAINVIEW

This is a low largely wetlands area lying between Long Hill and the Great Swamp Refuge. In addition to natural drainage and storm sewer piping, all of the water discharged from the Chatham Township Sewage Treatment Plant is channelized through here. A variety of uses of the land over the years had produced some interesting conditions on this site. In one place there is a large stand of mature pine trees on a knoll. The floor of this little forest is a bed of pine needles, dark and cool. There is a small pond among the trees. Behind the municipal building the swampy terrain has small mossy hummocks rising out of water supporting trees, water plants and animals.

Long Hill Lane and Evergreen Road are built on a ridge of land slightly higher than the surrounding areas. To the northwest of the power lines, several homes are built on the high spots. They are surrounded by lush laurel bushes, huge beech trees and large evergreens.

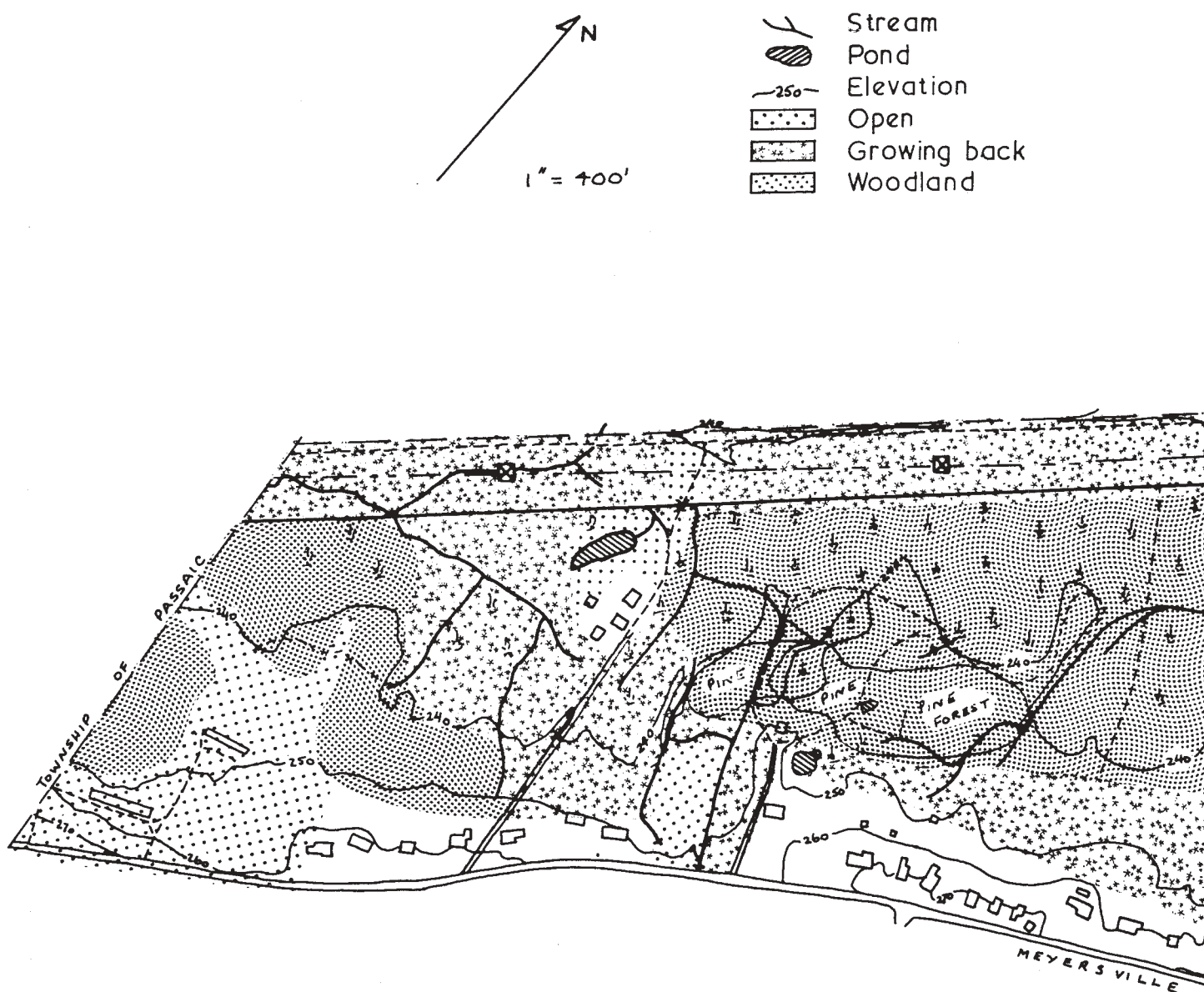
The area in the eastern section is on higher ground and is dryer. The Stonewyck and Pembroke Road development was constructed here in the late 1970's. Karlin Drive development was constructed in the 1980's. This area when inventoried in 1973 contained several springs and streams. Trails and campsites showed that people used to take advantage of the area's recreational possibilities.

The power lines have a raised dirt road along them, but are otherwise very wet. Water-loving plants such as cattails and phragmites exist in great abundance. Wildflowers also abound, and the waterways are hosts to wild ducks and geese. The lands under the power lines are used for hiking and cycling.

Except where explicitly noted, the land described here is private property.



SITE 4 MOUNTAINVIEW



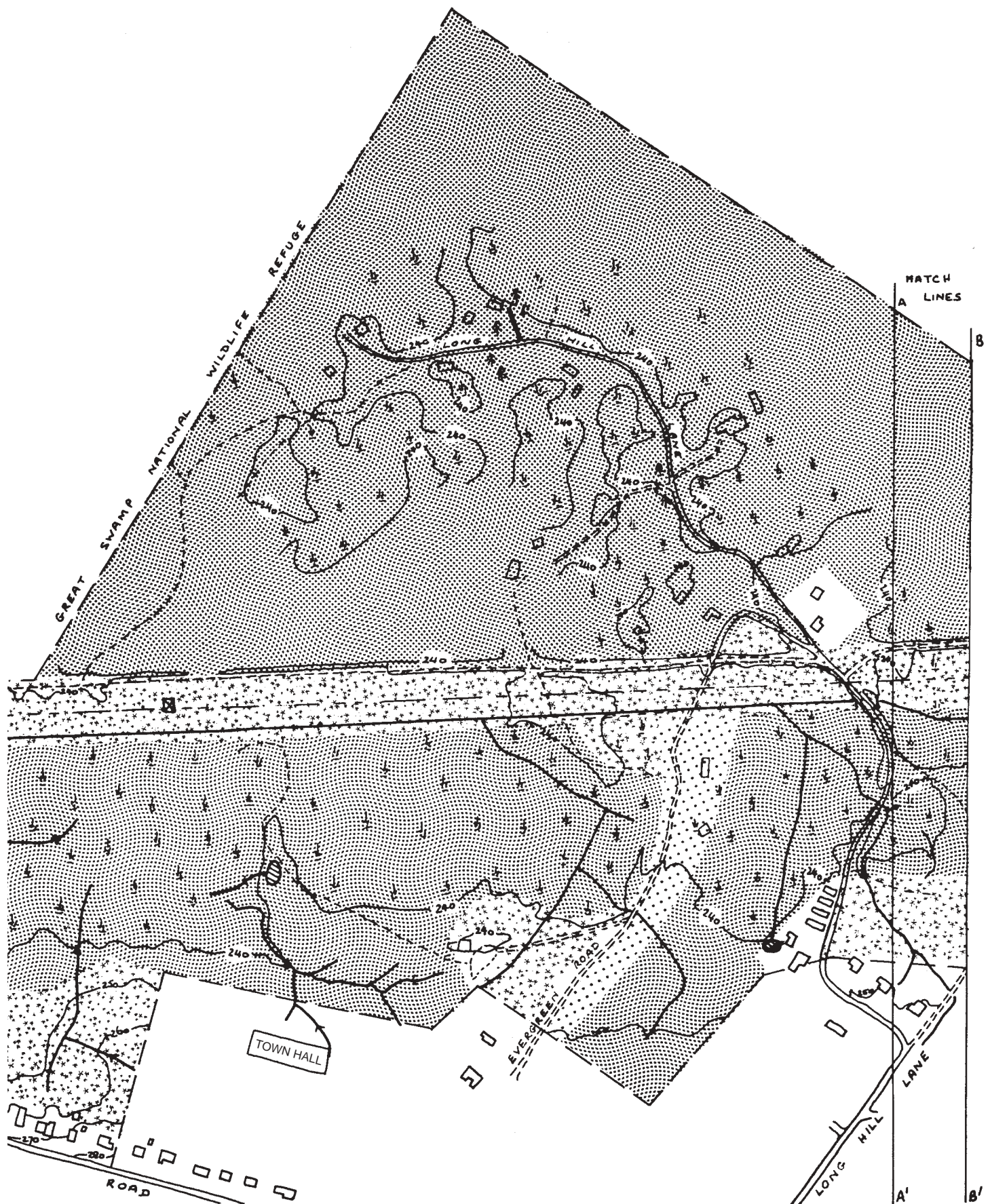
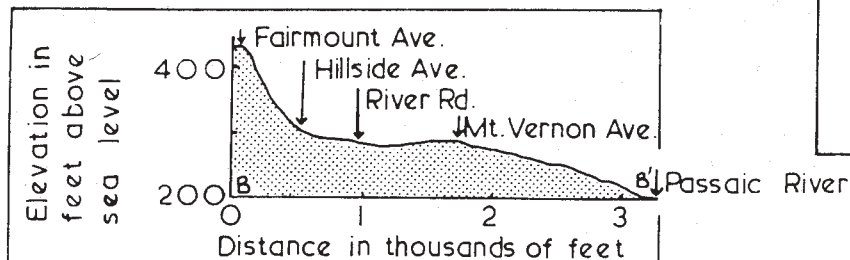
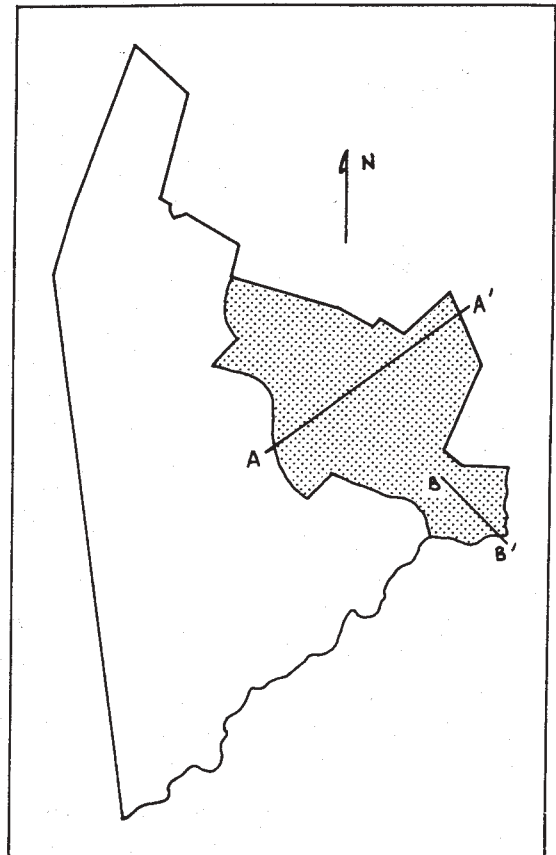


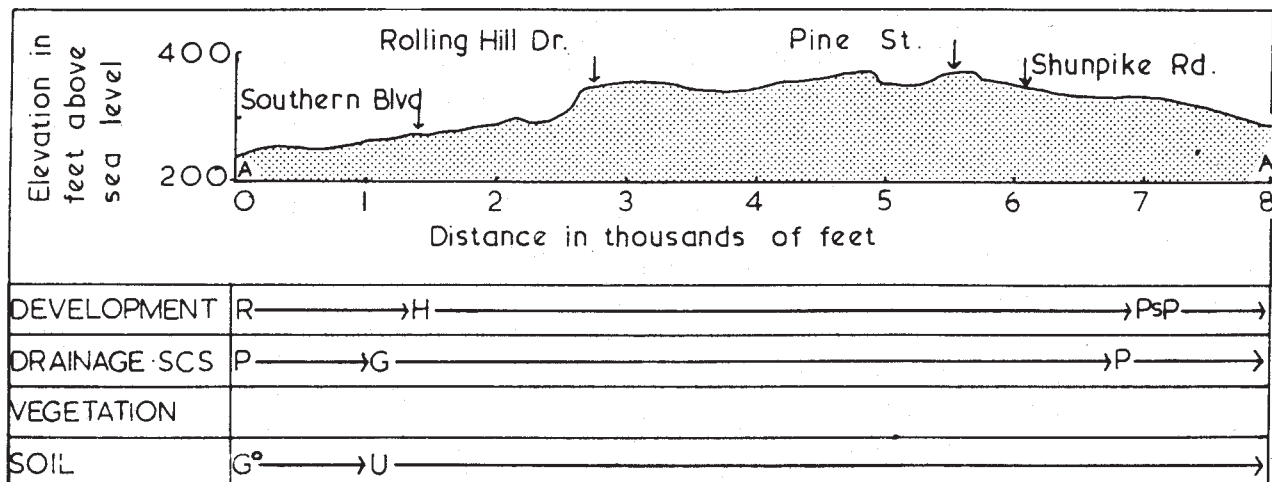
Figure 19
PRINCIPAL REGION: MORaine

ACREAGE	1974	1999	% CHANGE
HOUSE	704	838	+ 19%
APT/COMMERCIAL	2	2	0%
PUBLIC/SEMI-PUB.	129	129	0%
RECREATION	222	222	0%
G.S.N.W.R.	24	24	0%
UNDEVELOPED	371	237	- 25%
TOTAL	1452	1452	



DEVELOPMENT	H →
DRAINAGE SCS	G → P →
VEGETATION	O → W →
SOIL	Bh → S → M _g →

LEGEND: P. 30

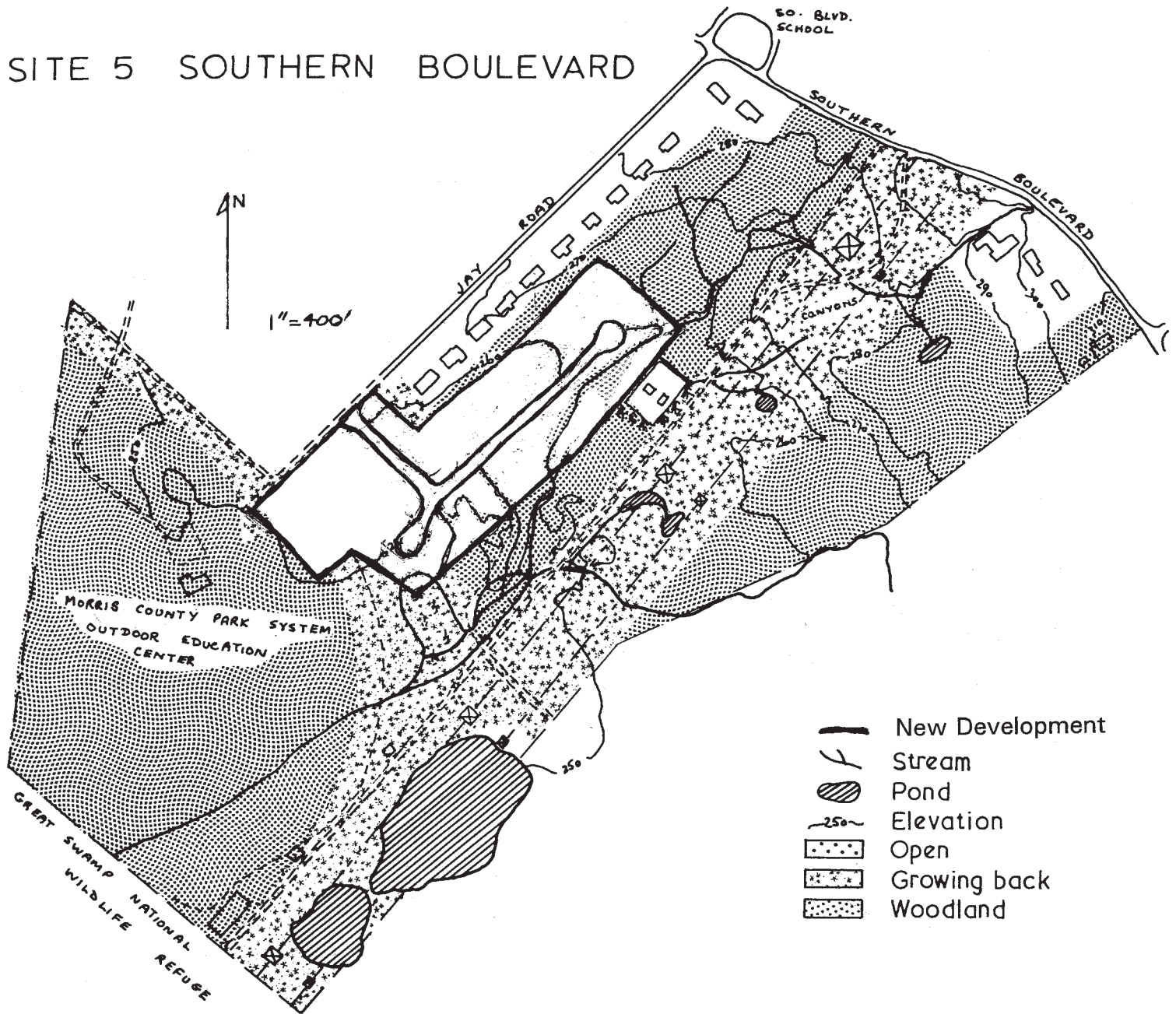


DEVELOPMENT	R → H → PsP →
DRAINAGE SCS	P → G → P →
VEGETATION	
SOIL	G ^o → U →

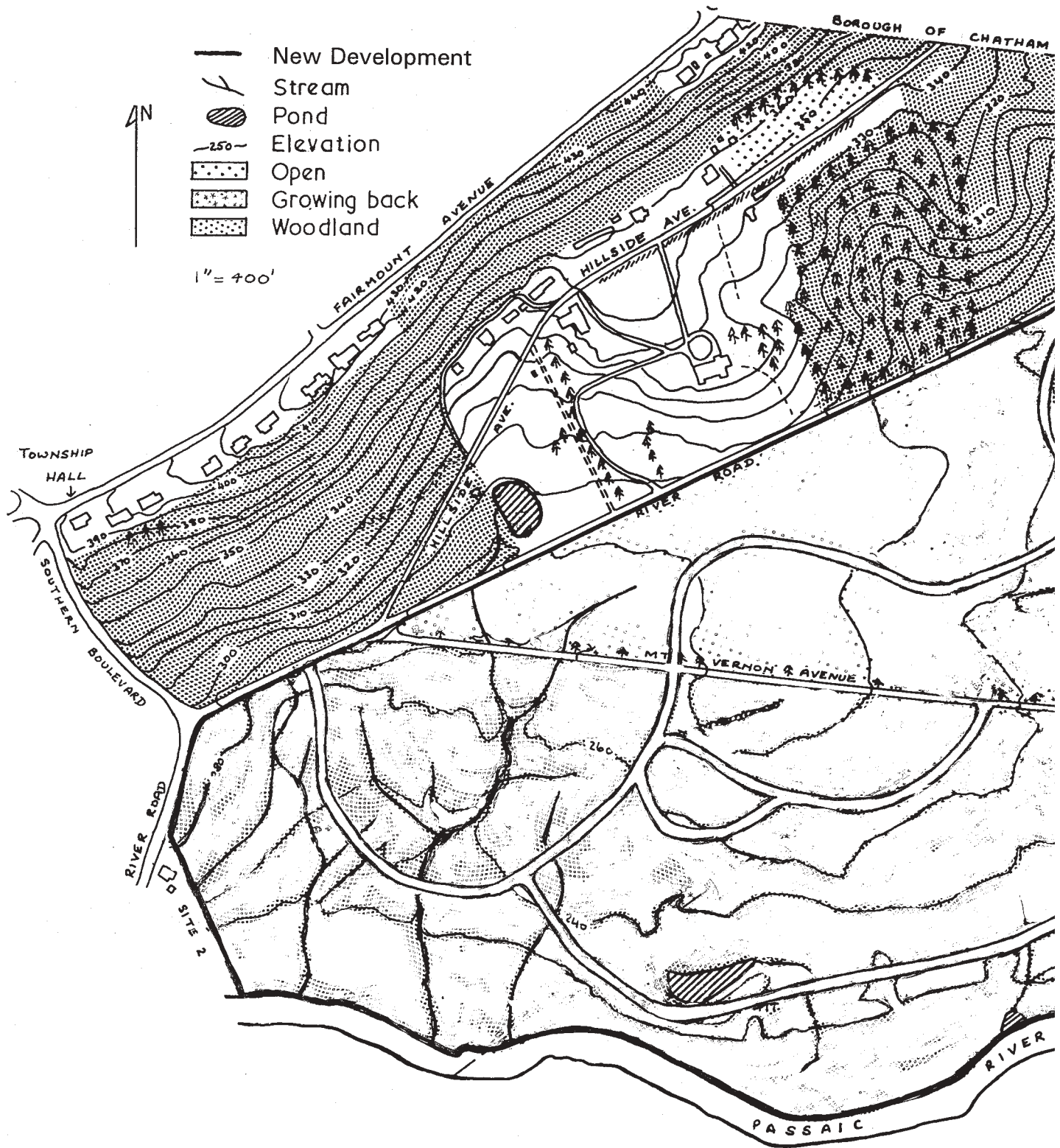
SITE 5. SOUTHERN BOULEVARD

This site is dominated by a power line and gas right-of-way. It is traversed by a small stream and woods. In the 1980's, housing and a new street, Geoffrey Court, were constructed on one side of the power lines. On the other side of the power lines, housing and a street were added to the Wickham Woods area, formerly known as the Schwartz farm.

SITE 5 SOUTHERN BOULEVARD



SITE 6 AVERETT



SITE 6. AVERETT

This site at the eastern end of Chatham Township is very different in character from the rest of the undeveloped land. These differences arise primarily from the glacial moraine and from the beach soils and clay deposits of the Glacial Lake Passaic which are found here.

Descending from Fairmount Avenue is a steep wooded slope. From its top, one has a good view of the land below. From here, you can see a large brick house in the center of carefully landscaped lawns and gardens. The mature ornamental vegetation is beautiful. Along Hillside Avenue there are many horse chestnut trees and a high hemlock hedge that has been pruned and nurtured for over seventy years. A large section to the east of the house is devoted to the growing of evergreen trees, mostly spruce.

A 900-unit townhouse development now occupies the areas south of River Road. There are four separate sections: Briarwood and Coachlight Square (north of Mt. Vernon Avenue), Sutton Woods, Heritage Greene and Vernon Grove (south of Mt. Vernon Avenue).

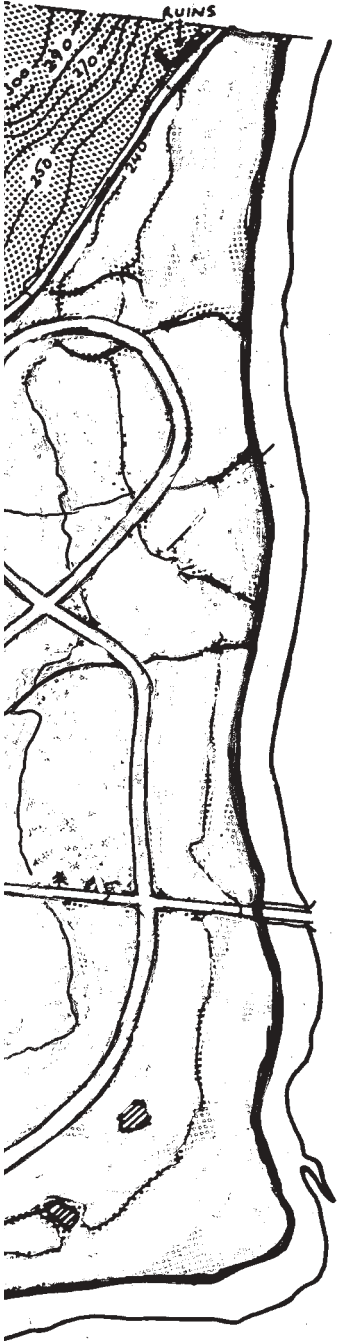
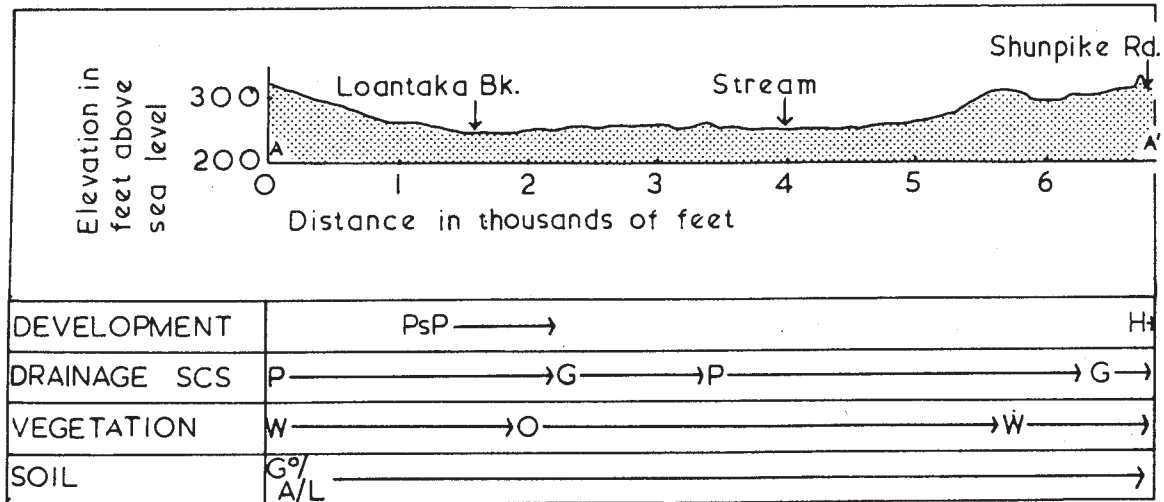
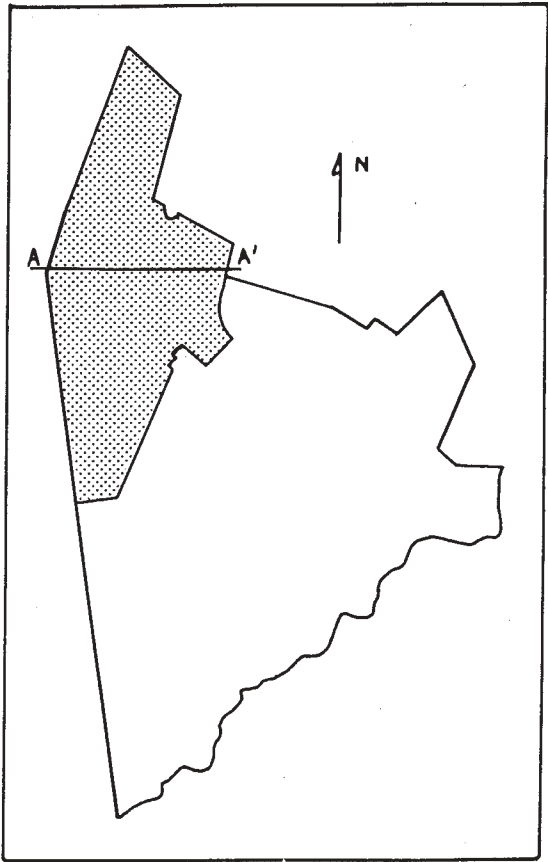


Figure 20
PRINCIPAL REGION: LOANTAKA

ACREAGE	1974	1999	% CHANGE
HOUSE	110	117.5	+ .07%
APT/COMMERCIAL	42	42	0%
PUBLIC/SEMI-PUB.	4	4	0%
RECREATION	315	315	0%
G.S.N.W.R.	51	51	0%
UNDEVELOPED	1069	1961.5	- .007%
TOTAL	1591	1591	



LEGEND: P. 30

SITE 7. GIRALDA FARMS (formerly known as Dodge)

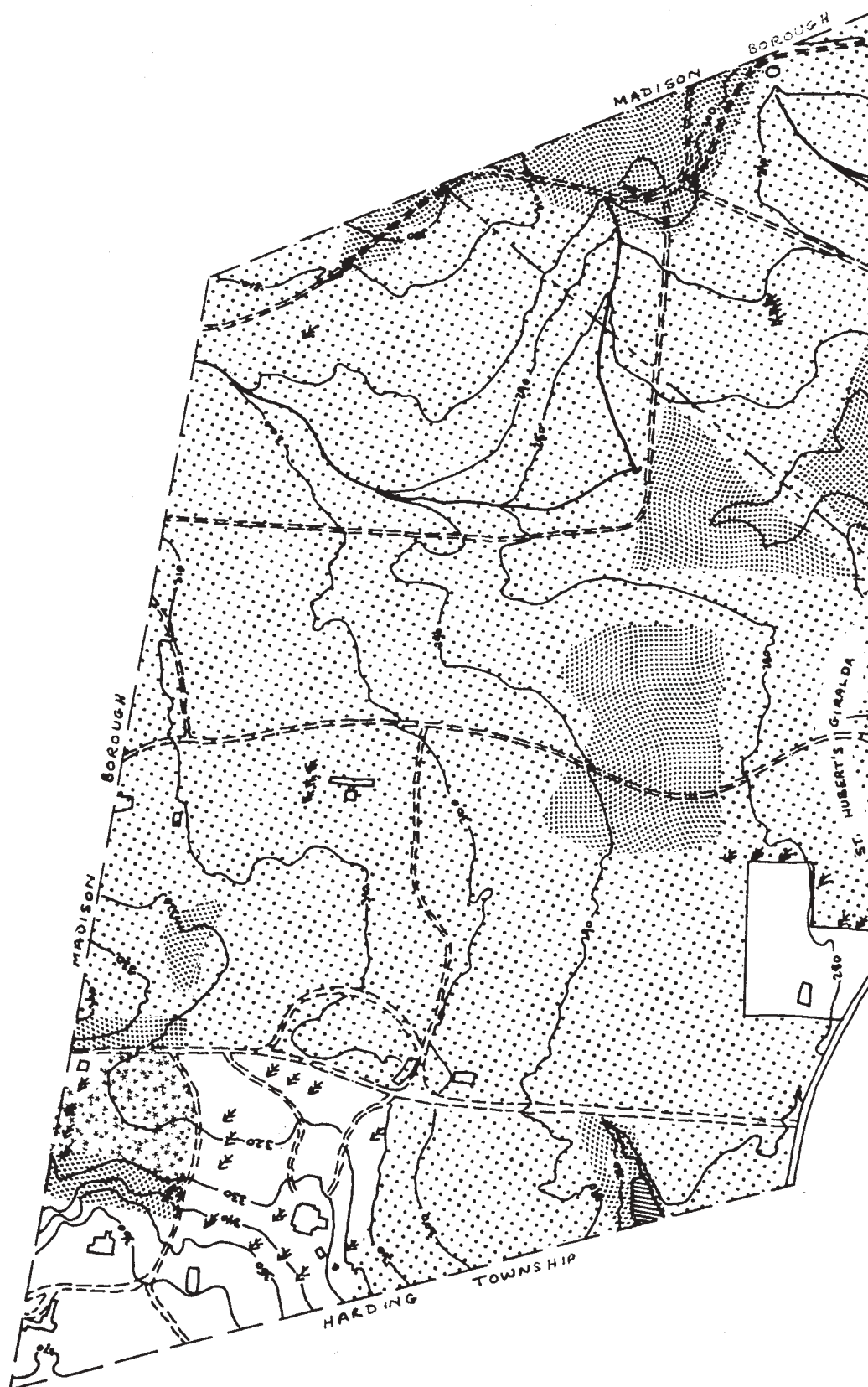
This site lies at the northern tip of Chatham Township. With the exception of Long Hill, it is the highest land in town. Several springs rise on the property and drain to the southwest through a wooded area, eventually to Loantaka Brook.

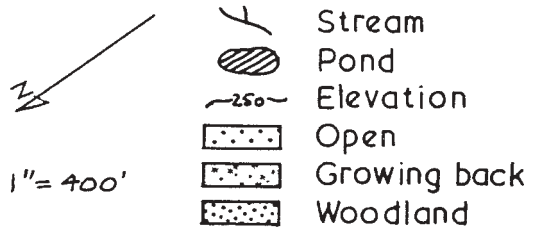
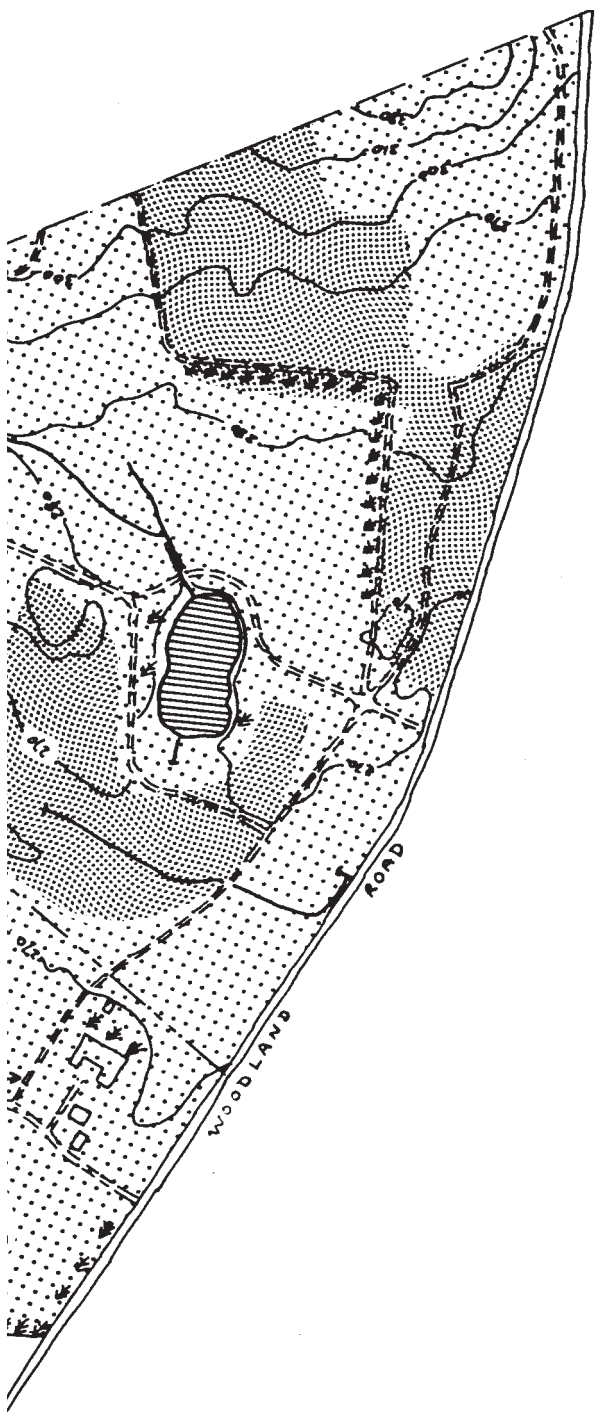
The section of this site bordered by Harding Township and Treadwell Avenue has five houses set among tall trees, many of which are mature evergreens. Prominently positioned, the Boisaubin House was built around 1790. It was a stop on the Underground Railroad and is on the National Register of Historic Houses. The property boasts the first historic conservation easement in the state to protect the seven acres surrounding the house. The property on the corner of Treadwell and Woodland Avenues has been subdivided and two new homes will be built.

The rest of this site is Giralda Farms, part of the former Dodge Estate. It is zoned for office development and most of the access drive is located in Chatham Township. Here a gently rolling terrain has been developed into broad lawns and small woods. It is planted with well-spaced trees which, through years of care, have developed into beautiful specimens of many indigenous and imported species. Access is by appointment only.

Except where explicitly noted, the land described here is private property.

SITE 7 DODGE
(GIRALDA FARMS)





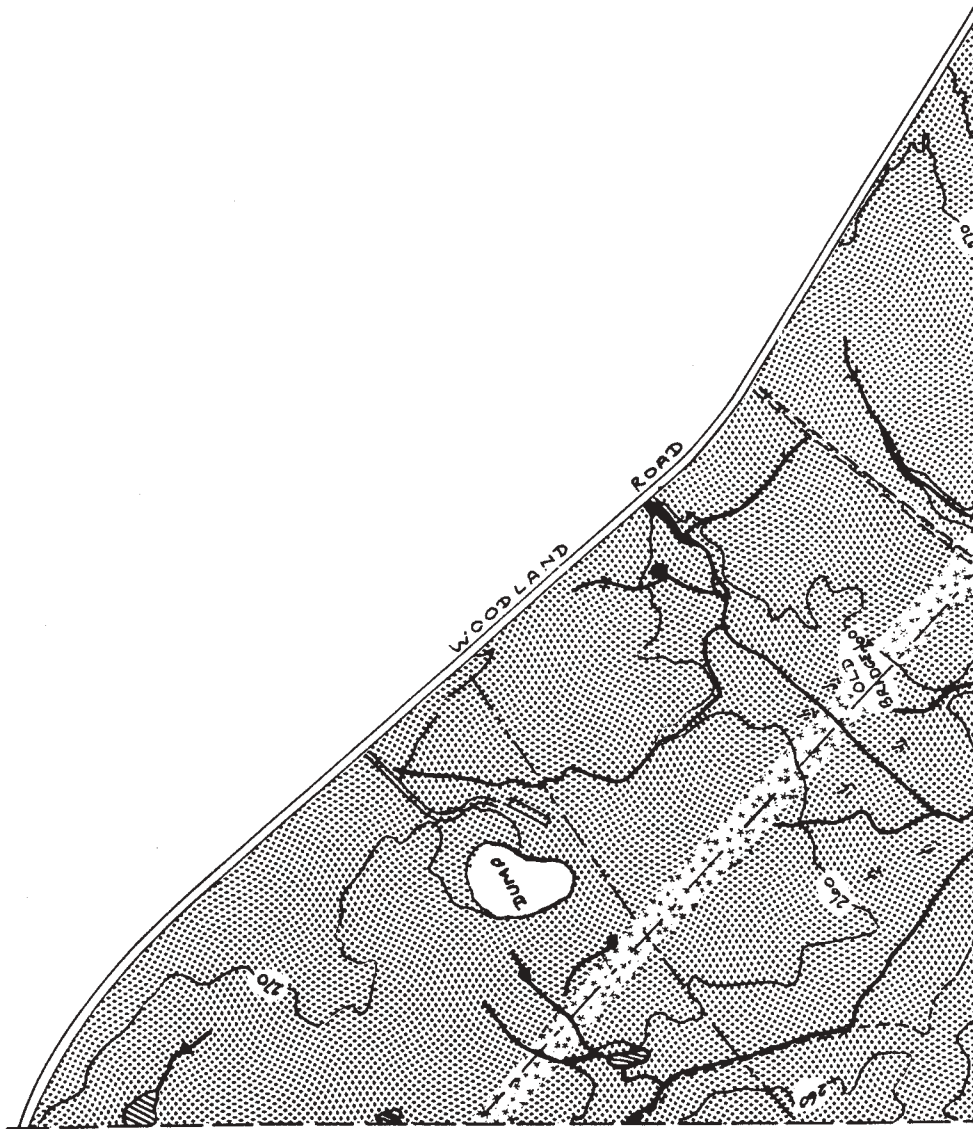
SITE 8. LOANTAKA

With the exception of the properties along Loantaka Lane North, this site is a secluded wooded valley owned for the most part by the Morris County Park System. It is easily entered and traversed along a county bike path. The setting is one of small streams, woods, swampy places, occasional clearings and Loantaka Brook, which is the major local watercourse. The only intrusion on the tranquillity of this site is the periodic passage of low-flying airplanes, on their way to Morristown Airport.

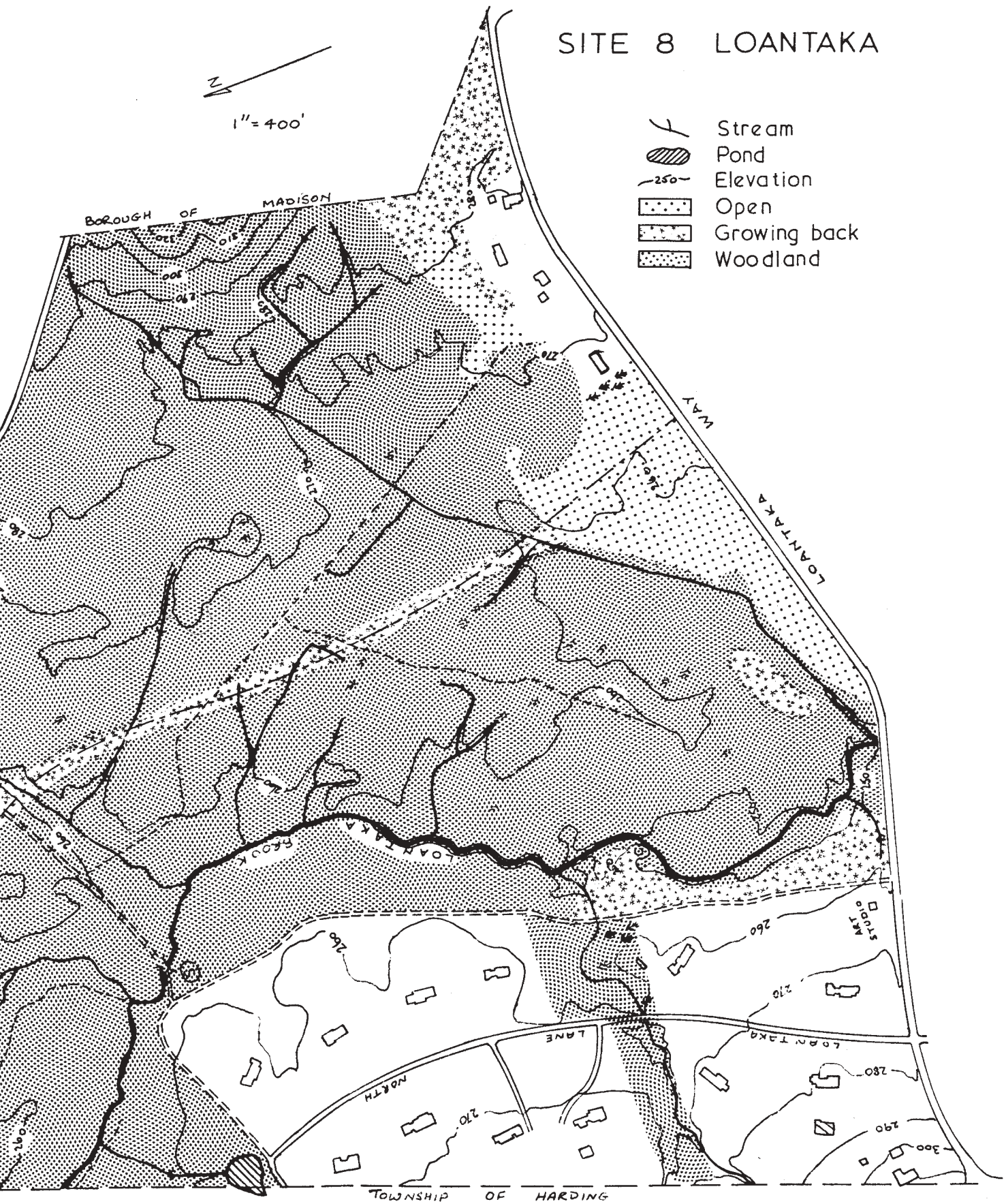
An especially noteworthy aspect of this site is the view that is seen by motoring along Loantaka Way. The scene is a very large clearing edged by young maple woods whose colors change not only with the season, but also with the atmospheric conditions of the day. The low-lying land often has pockets of mist or ground fog. Deer graze in this area, undisturbed by passing cars.

On the higher elevations in the northerly part of this site is an area of about 24 acres known locally as the Loantaka Moraine. Accessed from Woodland Road, it has beautiful views looking out over the Loantaka Valley. The undulating topographic lines show where waves of Glacial Lake Passaic once broke. Efforts to preserve this section of the site are ongoing.

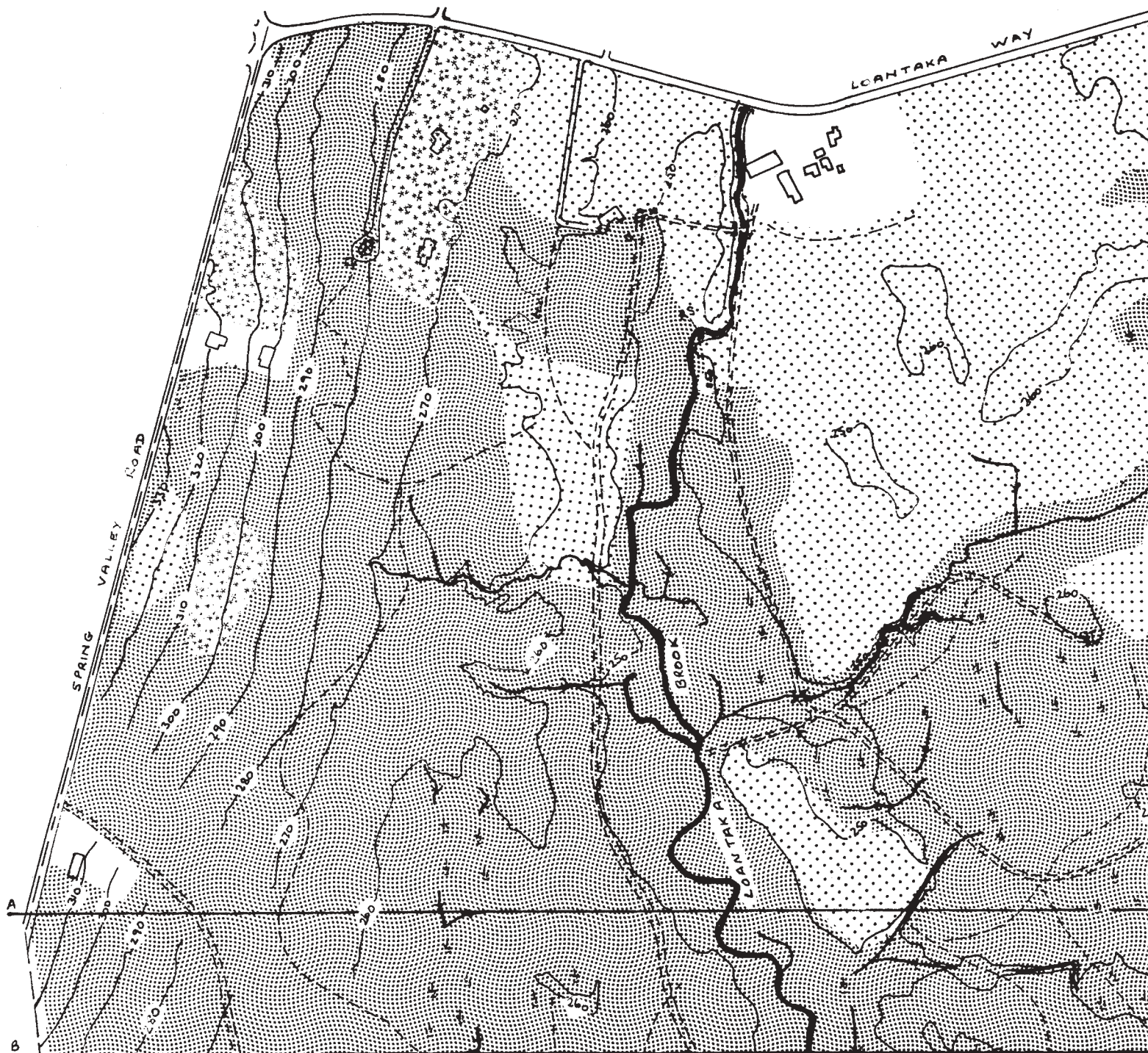
Except where explicitly noted the land described here is private property.



SITE 8 LOANTAKA



SITE 9 HICKORY



SITE 9. HICKORY

This site is comprised of a broad basin rather like a pie plate with a flattened southern edge. It has three more or less distinct natural divisions:

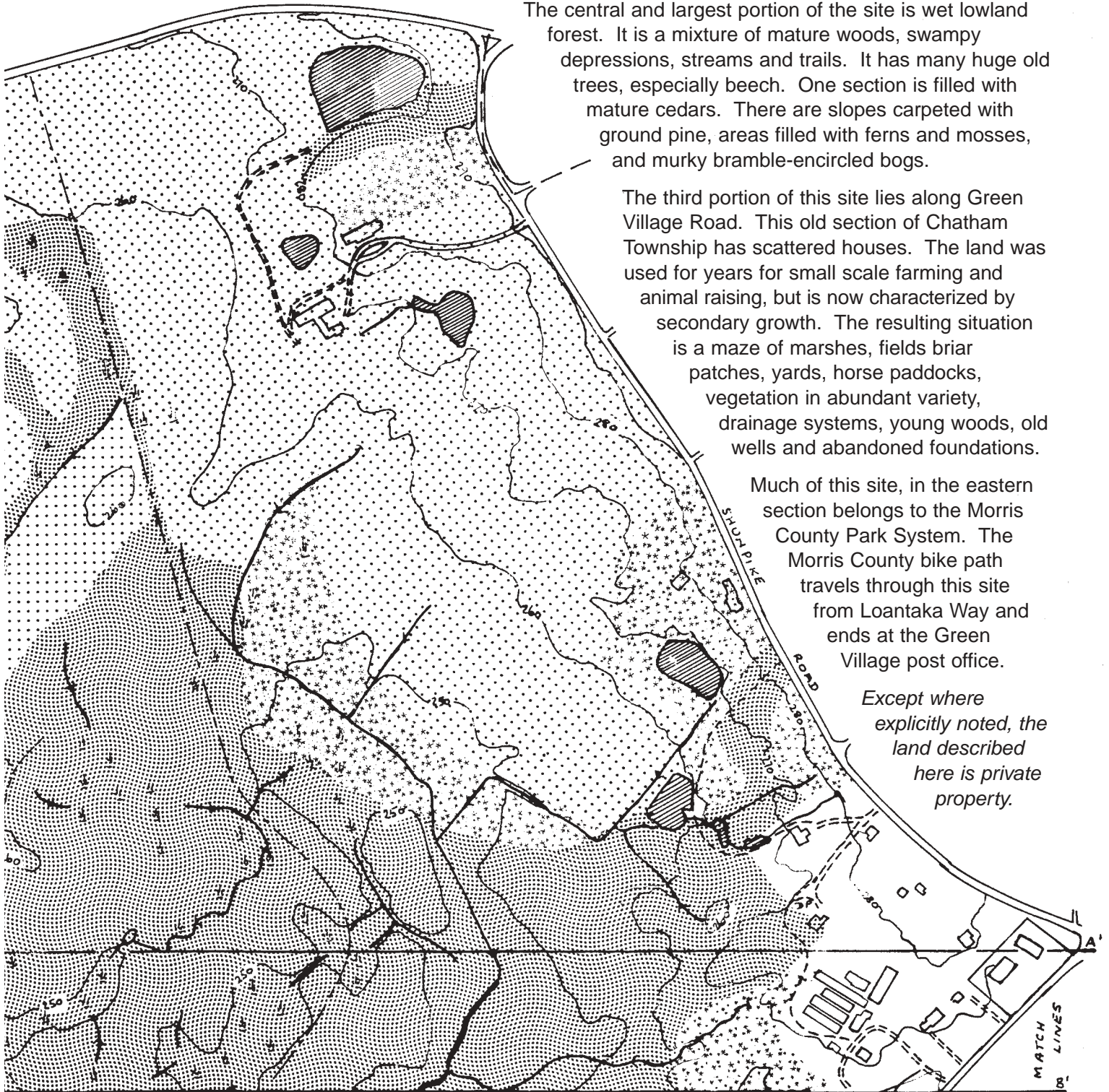
The northern portion of the site is cleared land, mostly grass with large, well-maintained rural homes. It is scenic. A site on the National Register of Historic Places, the Gibbons Barn, sits near the stone bridge over Loantaka Brook. Much of the grassland is pasture for horses.

The central and largest portion of the site is wet lowland forest. It is a mixture of mature woods, swampy depressions, streams and trails. It has many huge old trees, especially beech. One section is filled with mature cedars. There are slopes carpeted with ground pine, areas filled with ferns and mosses, and murky bramble-encircled bogs.

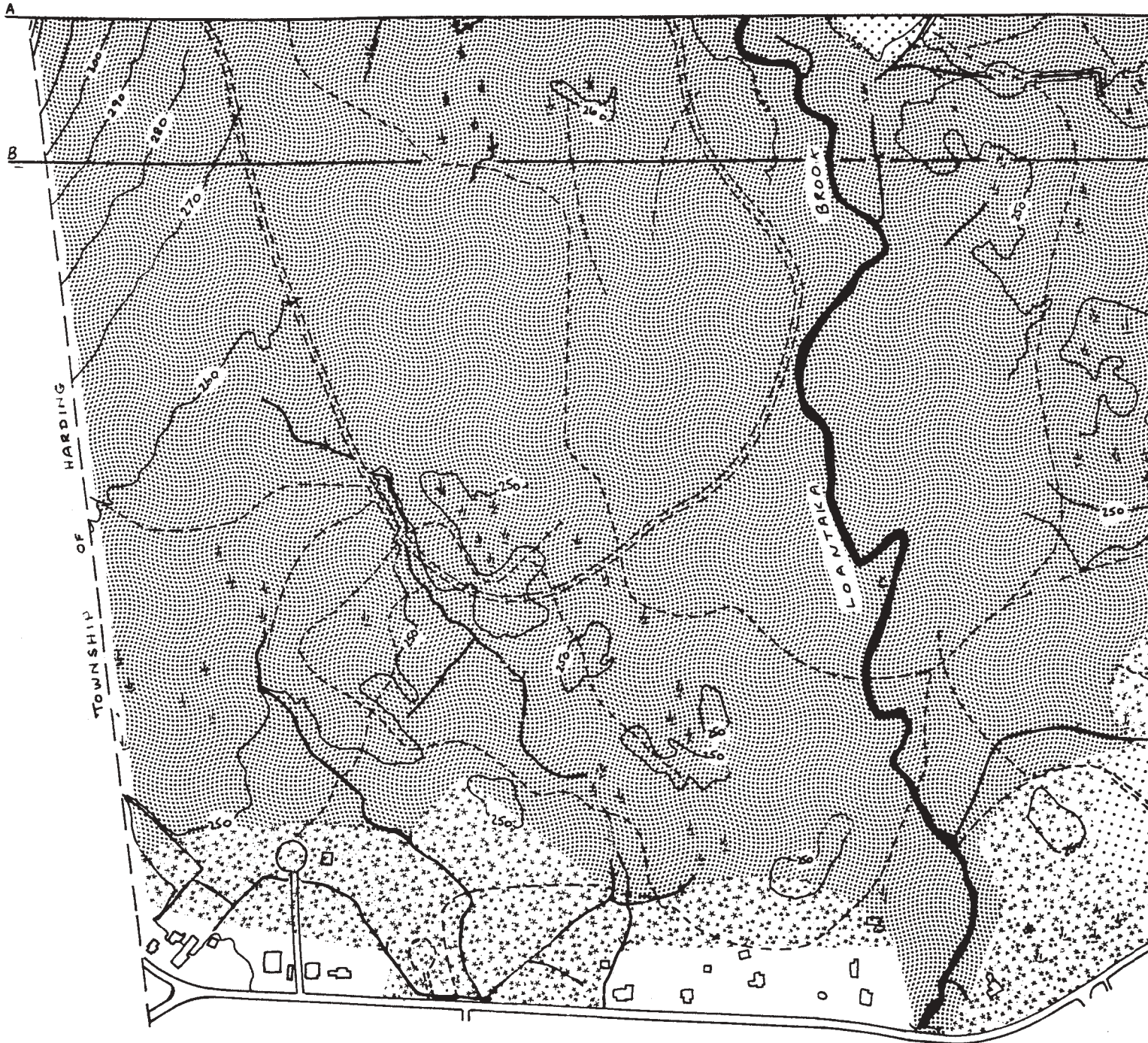
The third portion of this site lies along Green Village Road. This old section of Chatham Township has scattered houses. The land was used for years for small scale farming and animal raising, but is now characterized by secondary growth. The resulting situation is a maze of marshes, fields briar patches, yards, horse paddocks, vegetation in abundant variety, drainage systems, young woods, old wells and abandoned foundations.

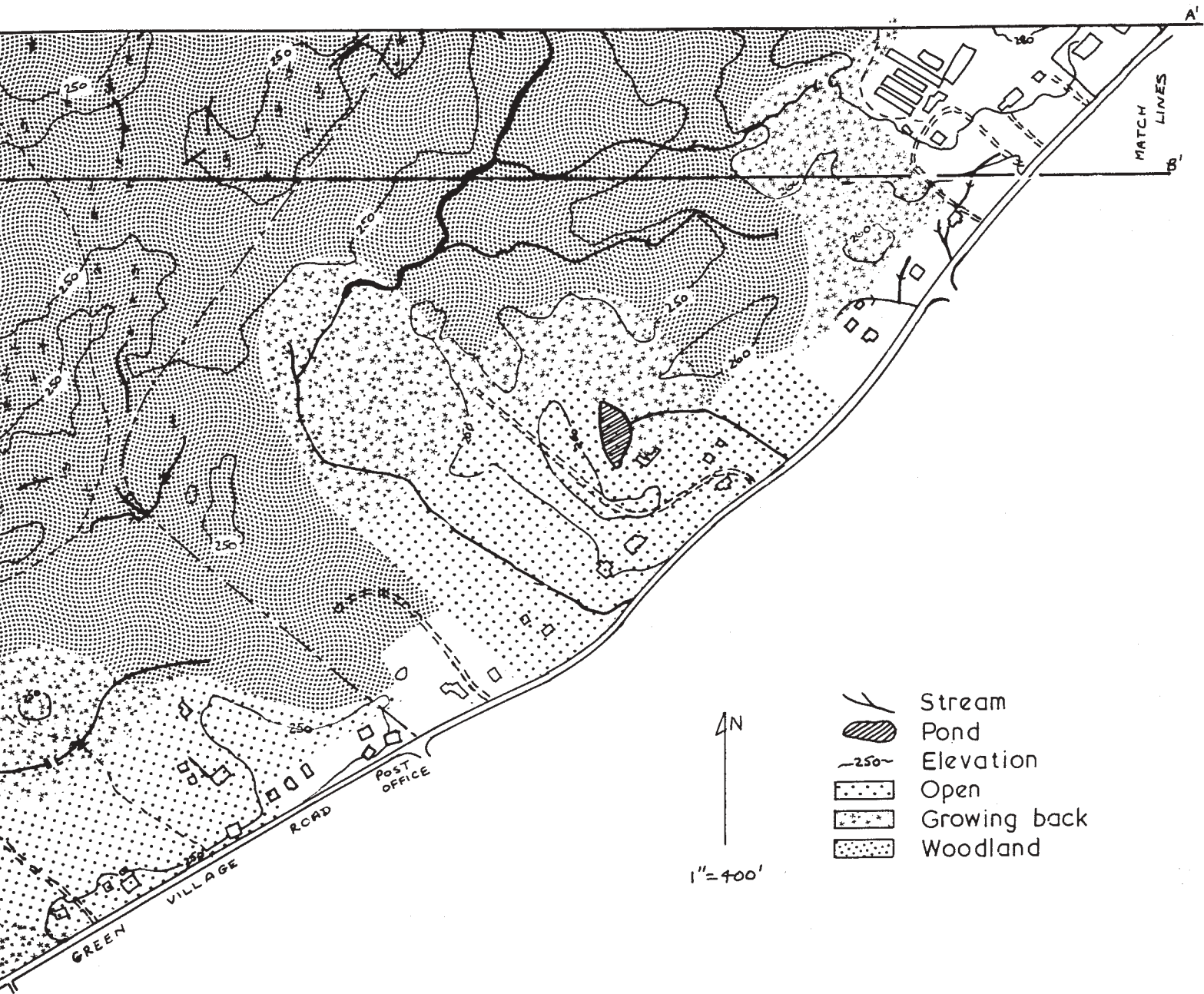
Much of this site, in the eastern section belongs to the Morris County Park System. The Morris County bike path travels through this site from Loantaka Way and ends at the Green Village post office.

Except where explicitly noted, the land described here is private property.



HICKORY (cont'd)





SITE 10. DELTA

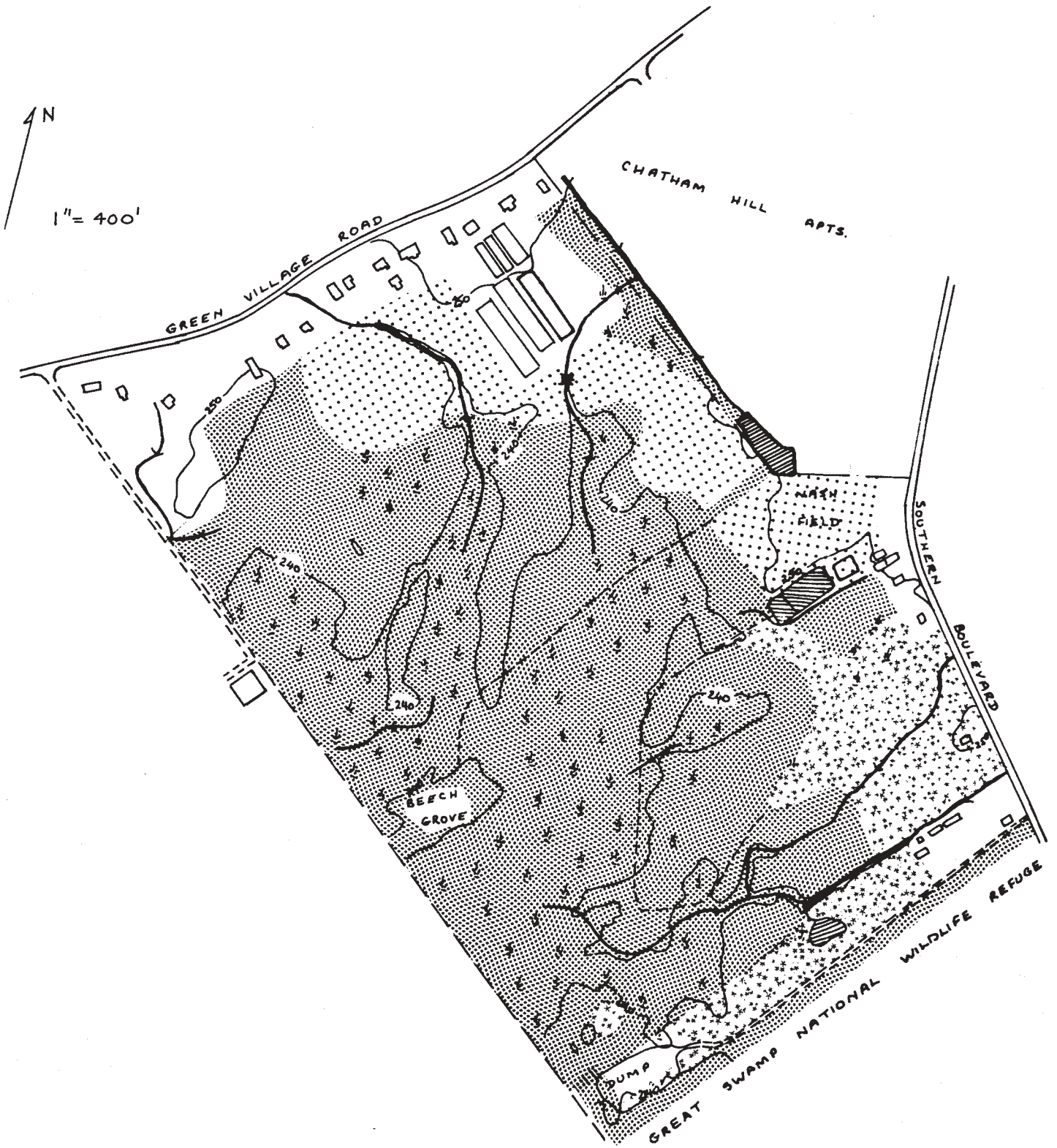
The most prominent feature of this site is water. The land receives runoff from a large area to the north and east and eventually discharges it into the Great Swamp. There is extensive use of drainage ditches and pipes to route water away from the buildings, cultivated fields, pastures and recreational areas. There are many low wet woods, swamps and marshes. Sandy ridges and knolls (principally along Britten Road and to the east) provide well-drained places for houses and small gardens. Practically all of the uncleared land is laced with dirt roads, trails and paths which skirt the wet areas.

To the west of Loantaka Brook is a large area, formerly used by a construction business and for raising horses. It is a picturesque setting.

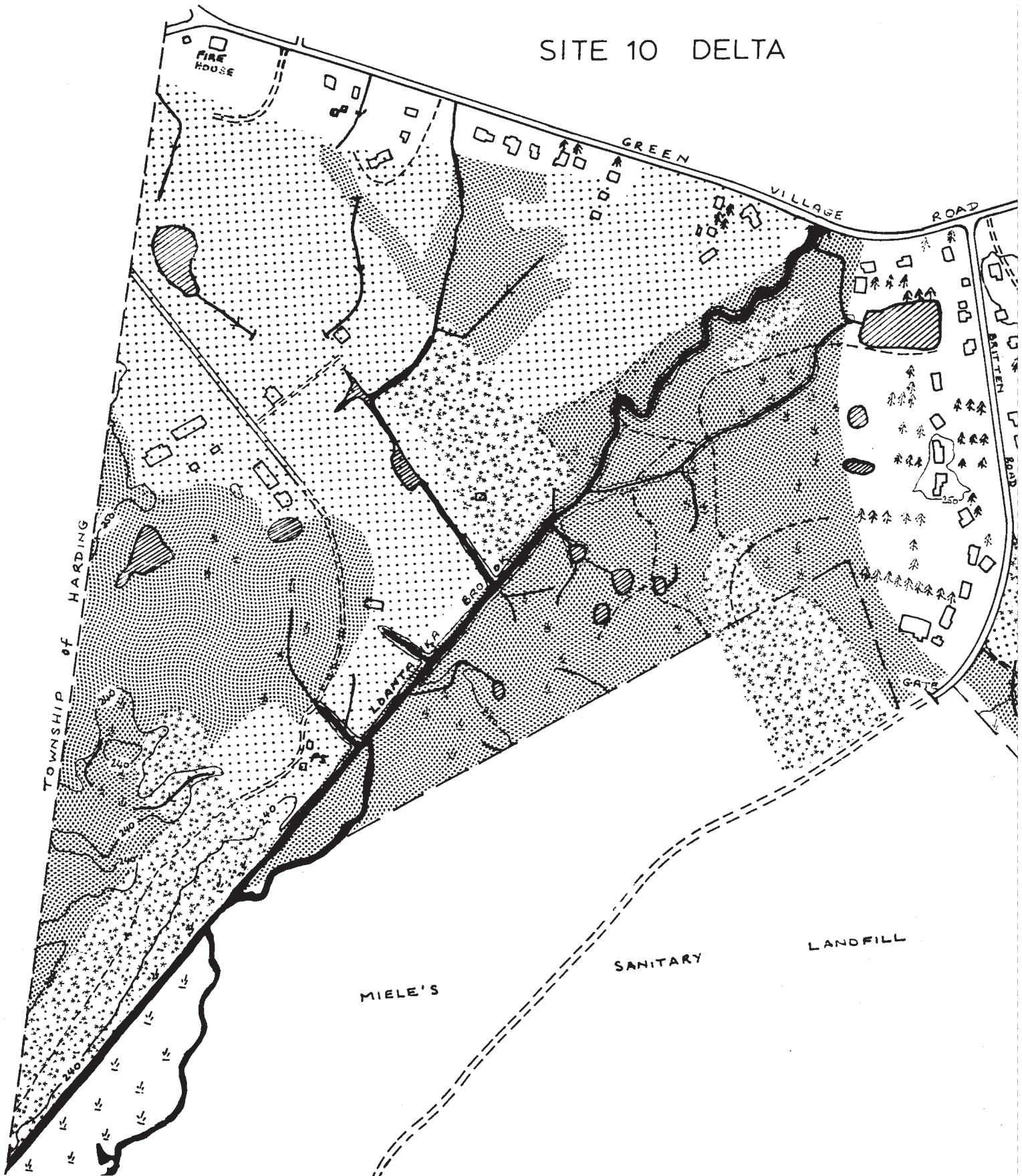
Township residents make use of the recreational facilities at Nash Field where there are ball fields, a skating rink, playground equipment, picnic tables and grills. Trails at the back of Nash Field were formerly used for nature walks. The site is a natural habitat for water oriented wild animals and birds. The dominant tree species here and on the rest of the Delta site are beech, oak and red maple.

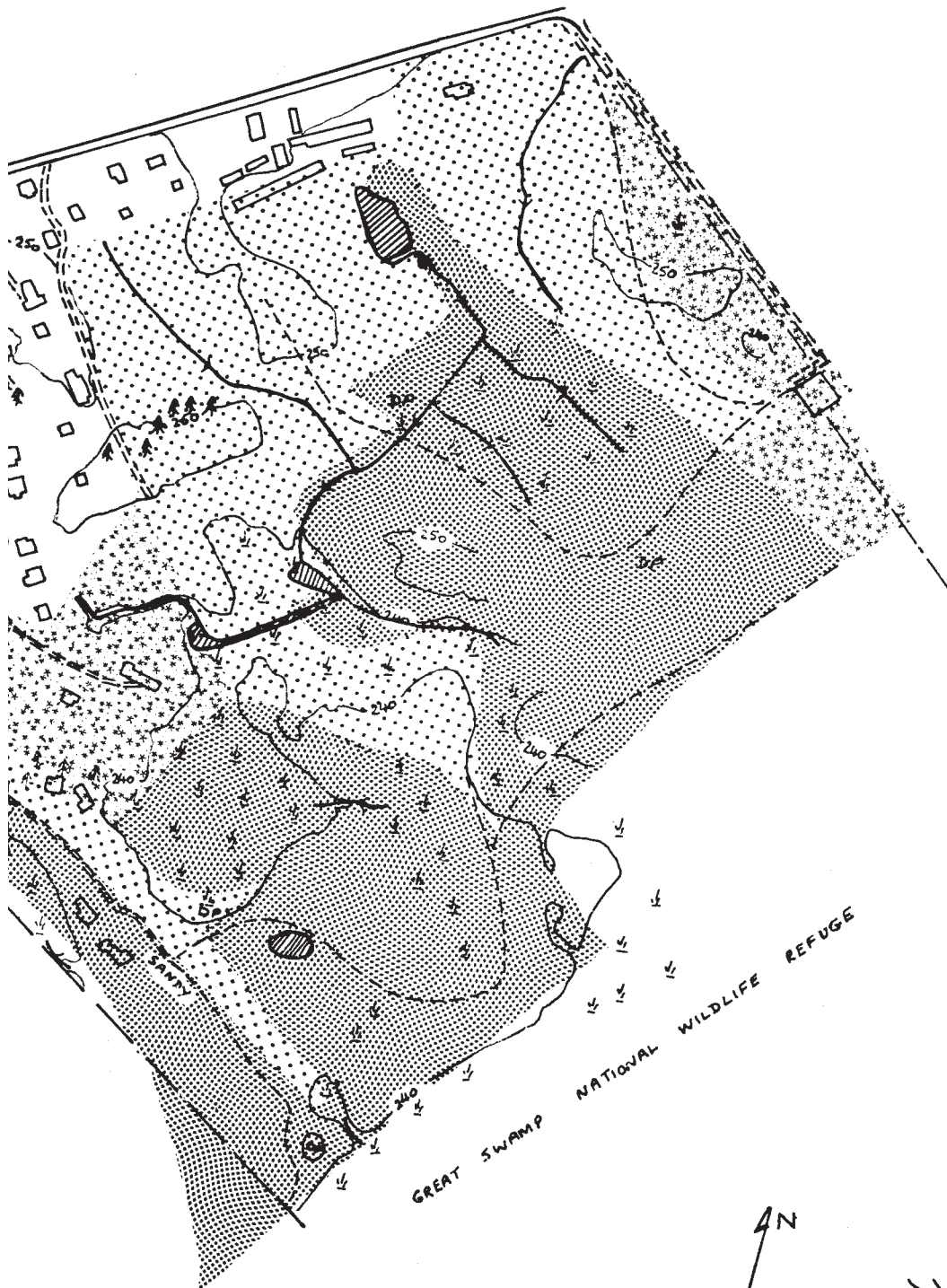
At the end of Britten Road is the Rolling Knolls landfill which was used as a sanitary landfill until it was closed in 1968. The fill has raised the land well above its original level, at the swamp elevation. Records of the Board of Health show that the westerly tributary of Black Brook is blocked by the landfill.

Except where explicitly noted, the land described here is private property









SITE 10 DELTA





1"=400'

-  Stream
-  Pond
-  Elevation
-  Open
-  Growing back
-  Woodland